

FIGHT RACISM!

FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

ANTI-IMPERIALIST PAPER OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST GROUP

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ST PAULS UPRISING

The black people of St Pauls drove the racist police off the streets! They have achieved a glorious victory for all oppressed people and the whole working class! For four hours on Wednesday 2 April St Pauls was a 'no-go' area for the British state. The sight of black people taking the offensive to defeat the police is a terrifying prospect for the imperialists. The revolutionary movement of black people is striking blows right to the heart of the British imperialist monster. The British state is counterattacking in an attempt to crush the resistance of black people. Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! salutes the tremendous victory in St Pauls and calls for full support for the defence of those arrested.

The police raid on the Black and White Cafe was one of many raids on black meeting places in Bristol. A few weeks earlier the blues on Brook Lane had been closed down by the police. When the police came to the Black and White at 2.30pm on Wednesday 2 April they were mounting yet another attack on the black community. The police came prepared for resistance. Apart from the twelve police making the raid, five dogs were used and a back-up force of over thirty police were waiting nearby. The police met more resistance than they could contain. Resistance from angry black people who have had enough of racist harassment and brutality from the police.

Police beaten

The police arrested Bertram Wilkes, the proprietor of the Black and White. They searched and harassed customers in the cafe. The police started removing crates of drink. News of the raid brought people onto Grosvenor Road outside the Black and White. Kids leaving school, unemployed youths and women - all dropped what they were doing to come and defend their cafe.

The police tore a man's trousers. They were abusive and refused to compensate him. Street fighting began soon after. Stones started flying. By 5pm a Panda car was smashed up. The police were forced away from the Black and White. The police had come to harass the black community and they got their fingers burnt! The police were beaten!

By 6pm the news was still spreading. More and more people arrived back from work and went out to Grosvenor Road. Everybody was smiling. Everybody knew the police had been beaten.

Police smashed

The police came back for more. At 6.30pm a

police recovery vehicle hitched up the burnt out Panda car and started towing it away down Grosvenor Road towards Sussex Place. A squad of police with riot shields retreated behind the recovery vehicle. Black people were lining the street to cheer the departure of the police. Then the police started with their dogs on the crowd from the opposite end of Grosvenor Road.

The black youths moved into action. Stones, bricks and bottles rained down on the police. The police hesitated, then they turned and ran! The police got into their cars, before they could drive ten yards all their windows were smashed. The police jumped out and ran off!

The youths made a pincer movement, trapping fifty police on City Road. The police managed to get through, the youths chased after them. The police clambered into waiting Transit vans and sped off to regroup their forces and await reinforcements.

Victory is sweet! On City Road at 7.30pm hundreds of youths gathered in joyful mood. Throughout the day it was black youths who led the fighting. Here and there white youths were in the crowd. They joined their black brothers and sisters on the front line. The oppressed white workers of St Pauls support the blacks when they take on the police. The only white people to get any trouble were the press photographers who tried to hide behind the police! This was no 'race riot'. It was a riot against the racist police and the racist system that the police defend. And the police were smashed!

Robbers hit

The youths turned in earnest to destroy the property of the oppressors and the racist system. Eight police cars and a police van were set alight. An office equipment store was raided. The windows of the Social Security

BELFAST - BRISTOL

SAME STRUGGLE - SAME ENEMY

'It was like a scene from Belfast without the bombs' (Daily Mail 3 April)

'But the youngsters feel they have little to lose, even if they do get caught. Respect for authority, represented by the institutions of white society - particularly the police - is at rock bottom. These people have virtually no stake in the community, do suffer continual police suspicion about their activities, and are sufficiently discriminated against, both at work and leisure, to feel trapped by their black skins. ... In some ways there are parallels with Ulster, where also few listened until it was too late, and where also there has grown up a generation of alienated youngsters within a minority population.' (Observer 6/4/80)

'These are things that we have regarded with horror when they happen in Ulster. We never dreamed that in the England of 1980 we could have 'no-go' areas like those of Londonderry. It must never, never happen again. (Sun 5/4/80)

Rarely has there been such a collective letting of cats out of bags by the ruling class. For one brief instant the uprising in St Pauls shook the truth from them - that what happened in St Pauls had no better parallel than the struggle in Ireland.

What a wonderful admission. For the Black people of Britain know very well what happened in St Pauls - an uprising of the racially oppressed against their enemy - the British State, its racist police force and the symbols of wealth and power - banks, post offices and government offices. Black people and all anti-imperialists in Britain felt a surge of joy at the defeat of the police in Bristol. And now the ruling class tells us that what happened in St Pauls is like ... what is happening in Ireland, 'like a scene from Belfast', has 'parallels with Ulster' etc, etc.

You must pardon us if we smile. Your panic has driven you to drop a clanger. For ten years you have told us that the struggle in Ireland is a terrorist struggle, waged by gangsters, psychopaths, criminals and assorted baby-eaters; that it is not a political struggle and that those who fight are not driven by political ends but criminal ones.

Now - by accident - you come close to telling us the truth: that the struggle of black people terrifies you precisely because like the Irish

struggle it is waged by the oppressed against the rich and powerful and first and foremost against the protector of the rich and powerful - the British imperialist state.

The instincts of the British ruling class rarely lead them astray. After all, they have been perfected over centuries of plunder and exploitation. Their instinctive and panic stricken connection between the Irish struggle and the black struggle is well justified. There are more than the superficial 'parallels' and 'similarities' continued on page 2

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FIGHT RACISM!

BELFAST-BRISTOL

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the ruling class noticed. The reality is that the two struggles are one because they have one and the same goal – the overthrow of the British imperialist state.

Irish people, and black people know the reality of British imperialism. They have no illusions in British democracy – for them it has always meant the same: high unemployment, the worst schools, the worst homes and constant and repeated harassment, torture and brutality at the hands of the British state. What difference that in Ireland it is the khaki-clad terrorists of the British army who do the dirty work, while in St Paul's, Chapeltown, Moss-Side and Hornsey it is the thugs in blue?

The Irish people have fought British imperialism for generations. The present phase of the struggle began as a movement for civil rights. When the nationalist population fought back against the discrimination they suffered in housing, employment and social services, that struggle met the full might of the sectarian police force of the 6-county statelet. When that force proved inadequate to the task of bludgeoning the nationalist population to its knees, then the British state intervened openly and directly by sending in its troops.

From that time the struggle became an open anti-imperialist war led by the IRA with the aim of driving British imperialism out of Ireland as the pre-condition for achieving the demands and aspirations of the Irish people. The whole armed might of the British state has failed to defeat the IRA. Far from it, the IRA has grown in strength and support and has literally fought British imperialism to a standstill in the face of an unprecedented campaign of terror and torture by the British state.

No wonder the uprising in St Paul's has terrified the ruling class. For now they have cause

for nightmares, not only about being defeated and being driven out of Ireland, but also about a growing revolutionary struggle led by black people here in the heart of the monster itself.

Let them fear well! For they have created a section of the working class in Britain whose racial oppression means that they have *nothing to lose*. The struggle of the black people as has most recently been shown by St Paul's will inevitably have the same anti-imperialist character as the Irish struggle.

Because they face a common enemy – the British state – the black people in Britain and the Irish people in Ireland will inevitably extend their hands in friendship and unity in struggle. The IRA has already recognised this fact:

'Among the black minorities in England there is a kind of parallel repression in the way that the police repress them. I am sure there would be sympathy there for us' (An Phoblacht)

And the black vanguard in Britain has also recognised this fact and has been active in urging support for the struggle of the Irish people. Thus the Asian Youth Movement Bradford calls unequivocally for 'Victory to the IRA'.

This is the path forward that makes the ruling class tremble. These two struggles united – the Irish struggle to defeat British imperialism in Ireland and the revolutionary struggle led by black people to plunge the sword into its very heart here in Britain.

Let the ruling class tremble for the recognition of the unity of the struggle is spreading. It was summed up by a black youth in St Paul's. He said:

'All the oppressed and sufferers are IRA'.

From Bristol to Belfast the message is clear: **Smash the British State!**

Maxine Williams

ST PAULS continued from page 1

building were smashed, it was agreed to leave the building intact. Then the youths moved back up Grosvenor Road to Sussex Place. Lloyds Bank was set afire. The robber bank that screws its riches from out of the hands of oppressed people is subject to the wrath of the people! When the oppressed people of Soweto in South Africa rose up they destroyed the robber Barclays Bank. The oppressed people of St Pauls rose up and destroyed the robber Lloyds Bank!

The Post Office and the betting shop went soon after. These were the main targets hit – the police, government buildings and the bank. The youths struck back against the imperialist state that oppresses and robs black people!

Certain other shops were then raided. Poor white workers joined in the distribution of the merchandise. Old age pensioners and young kids just took what they needed. Many shops were not even scratched.

No go for four hours

For over four hours St Pauls was a no go area for the British state. Chief Constable Weigh admitted this. 'As soon as we moved a police vehicle into the area it was attacked'. The police were forced to release Bertram Wilkes. The police did not attempt to seal off St Pauls. Traffic kept coming through and local people stood on the street to direct cars.

Over a mile away several hundred police gathered outside Trinity Road Police Station. Weigh called in two hundred reinforcements from neighbouring counties. It was well past 11pm before the police moved back towards St Pauls. 500 police were deployed to seal off side streets and regain Sussex Place. The police came back, but too late to deny that on 2 April 1980 in the battle of St Pauls, black people scored a glorious victory over the British imperialist state.

Black vanguard

News of St Pauls flashed across the country. The oppressed knew that a victory had been gained and they grew in confidence. Black youths fought the police in Finsbury Park in London. In Moss Side, Manchester black people fought the police. White workers followed their example. On a Birmingham council estate fighting started. One hundred white working class youths from the Southmead council estate, an Irish area in Bristol, met up and fought the police. A month before six police had beaten up a lad in the cells of Southmead Police Station. If the idea came from St Pauls, the white youths had their own reasons for fighting the police. The police brought in reinforcements from Redland and Bridewell. 18 arrests were made on Thursday and Friday night. Three youths have been charged with making petrol bombs. One lad went to ask why his brother was being arrested. For this 'crime' he was handcuffed and dragged to the waiting police van. Several police attacked him in the van, and he was beaten up again in the police station. The police broke his nose yet he is charged with assault on the police! The agitation of the black people in St Pauls drew white workers into the front line against the British state. Black people are already in the vanguard of the whole working class struggle to defeat British imperialism!

The state counterattacks

The Thursday after the revolt saw a massive contingent of 300 police in St Pauls. Two coach-loads of black people coming to give support were stopped on the motorway and turned back by the police. Police Land Rovers, equipped with wire meshing to protect the windows, drove up and down. Army personnel photo-

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BECOME A FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! SUPPORTER

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! is committed to the building of an anti-racist, anti-imperialist movement in Britain. It is a campaigning newspaper actively engaged in support of the struggles of black people in Britain against racism and the struggles of liberation movements against British imperialism.

How can you aid our work?

We need more people to sell **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** so that new people can read it and become involved in the fight-back. We need more people writing for **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** about their local struggles and campaigns. We need many more people subscribing to **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** to give us the regular income we need to support our work.

Become a **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** subscriber – for £1.50 you will get 5 issues, for £3 you will get 10 issues.

Become a **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** seller – order 10, 20 or more copies and sell them.

Become a **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** correspondent – send us news of the issues and struggles in your area.

BECOME A SUPPORTER

If you support our aims why don't you become a supporter? Fill in your name and address, enclose £2 (cheques and postal orders payable to RCG Publications Ltd) and send to 49, Ralston Road London SE24 6LN. You will receive a supporters card, a year's subscription to FRFI and details of all our activities in your area and nationally.

Name _____
Address _____

WE NEED FRFI MONTHLY!

The first issue of **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** appeared only six months ago. In this short period we already see the enormous importance of a regular anti-racist, anti-imperialist paper.

FRFI carries the latest information on the struggles of black people, which are leading the fight against the racist British state:

- the campaign to bring Anwar Ditta's children home
- the fight of the Earlington family against the racism of the courts and the police
- the St Paul's victory over the Bristol police
- the defence of the Oldham brothers and sisters arrested on 12 April.

FRFI brings you the news of the liberation struggles against British imperialism in Southern Africa and in Ireland.

FRFI is playing a vital role in the building of an anti-racist, anti-imperialist movement in Britain. Such a newspaper committed to the struggles of the oppressed is a vital weapon in the political battles ahead.

But FRFI has to come out more often. The struggles of the emerging vanguard demand at the very least a monthly paper. To do this we need more fulltimers on the staff of the paper. We need more equipment. We need to expand into new areas of the country. You, our supporters, can make this possible by actively supporting the paper, selling it and raising money for the fund drive.

We need money now.

Send us £2 at least every month.
Our first fund drive ends 22nd September at the end

of May. Up to the end of April our supporters have raised over £900. We thank all those who have shown their commitment to support the work of FRFI by donating and raising money for the fund drive. Yet we are by no means raising money in amounts capable of sustaining a monthly paper. It is up to you. If you want a paper to counter the lies and hypocrisy of the anti-working class press you have to raise the money urgently from now on every month.

How you can help.

- The best way to build FRFI is to take 10, 20 or more copies of each issue. Sell it to your friends, your workmates, take it round your estate – get others to take the paper – and ask everyone you sell to for a donation for the fund drive.
- Can you make a regular commitment to the fund drive? Let us know how much you can afford – weekly or monthly. Pay by postal order or cheque.
- Take out a £10 deal. For this you get an FRFI supporter's card, and all our publications – **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!**, **Hands Off Ireland!**, **Revolutionary Communist** and other pamphlets – over a twelve month period. The donation goes to the fund drive and we will keep you informed of FRFI activities in your area.
- Can you organise or help us organise a fund-raising event in your area? A disco or a film show? This is an entertaining way to raise money for the paper. Jumble sales and bookstalls are easy to organise and can raise £50-£100. Raffles can raise £10-£25 in an evening. Each issue of FRFI will carry a progress report on the fund drive.

BRITISH DEMOCRACY NEWS IN BRIEF

In Scotland a 25 year old man was imprisoned for 6 months after having been charged with a breach of the peace. His offence? He had too openly displayed his joy at the demise of Lord Mountbatten by banging on the roof of a bus and singing: 'Ee eye addio Uncle Dickie's dead'.

Sheriff Archibald Bell, sentencing him to 6 months said:

'The provocative nature of the utterances attributed to you might in other circumstances have had more serious consequences.'

A man with an Irish name decided to go and watch the proceeding at the Old Bailey. He was unaware that on that day the appeal of the people who were framed for the Woolwich and Guildford pub bombings was being heard.

Seeing those in the queue for the courtroom undergoing body searches and being asked to produce documents he became afraid that his Irish name would mark him out for special treatment and therefore decided to go and watch a different trial. The police then arrested both him and his two friends under the PTA.

The Asian Youth Movement, Bradford organised a national meeting of black groups and individuals to discuss the Black Freedom March. A plain blue van was stationed outside the hall and used to photograph the delegates attending the meeting. When the occupants of the van were challenged no less than 15 police cars arrived, making it clear that the whole affair was a political spying operation by the police.

FIGHT RACISM

graphed the remains of Lloyds Bank. A group of kids were taunting the police, 'Why did you run away?'

The policemen bent over backwards to be friendly bobbies in front of the TV cameras. When black kids playing football knocked off the helmets of policemen, they just grinned and put them on again! Behind this cheerful facade the state was mounting a major operation of surveillance, raids and arrests.

Chief Inspector Lane, community relations officer, announced plans to increase the number of 'community' constables from one to ten. These are to be 'policemen first' and 'community workers second!'. Their purpose will be to maintain a 24-hour watch on the area. So-called 'community policing' is simply another tactic used by the police in their efforts to smash organised resistance to the British state. The police in St Pauls started to gather information by chatting to young children. Easily recognised CID men sloped around. Over the next few days 1,500 people were interviewed. Homes throughout the area were raided. Residents in Badminton Road, just off Sussex Place, had their belongings turfed out onto the street.

Questioning

The police picked up people in ones and twos and took them in for 'questioning'. Officers specially trained in extracting information have been brought into Bristol. 'Questioning' consists of abuse, intimidation and beatings. On the night of 2 April the corridors of Trinity Road Police Station echoed to the shouts of 'Get in there you black bastard'. One youth was taken to Trinity road where he was presented with a statement already concocted by the police. The statement included an admission of throwing stones. The youth refused to sign and he was eventually released. Another youth was taken to Trinity Road and he was asked about his whereabouts on 2 April. He refused to give any information. One of the three police in the cell rapped in his knuckles across the youth's face. The youth was then beaten about the head and his ears were boxed so badly that he couldn't hear for two days. After this 'questioning' the youth was told to return on 6 June.

The courts

The courts are also being used as part of the counterattack—just as they were in Southall. Fourteen people—nine black and five white—appeared in court on 3 April. The magistrates granted bail on condition that those charged either observed a curfew from 8pm to 7am, or they stayed out of St Pauls altogether! One black woman was refused bail. Despite the fact that she has four young children she was remanded in police custody! The whole court proceedings were racist. The court ushers tried to force the many Rastafarians in the public gallery to remove their hats. This met a blunt refusal and the racists were forced to back down! The black people showed their contempt for Britain's racist 'justice'. They refused to stand for the magistrates entering and leaving the courtroom.

So far, over 60 arrests have been made. Whenever a bail application comes before the magistrates, the public gallery is packed with black people. This show of strength and a united resistance against the state's attack has already achieved minor victories. On 14 April the woman who was first refused bail came before the court a second time. The courtroom was packed out with her supporters. The magistrates were forced to grant bail.

Defend St Pauls!

After the police onslaught on black people in Southall in April 1979 the state used its racist courts to try and crush the Southall Youth Movement. After the police were smashed in Bristol in April 1980 the state is trying to prevent a lasting organisation emerging from within the black community. The British state knows full well that its racist police force will meet further resistance from black people. The British state is trying to ensure that the outcome of future confrontations will not be defeats such as it

received in St Pauls. The police will be equipped and further trained to deal with 'riot' conditions. At the same time the state will use every weapon available to it to isolate the revolutionary organisation of black people. The cases of those arrested start coming up from 1 May onwards. Individuals have been charged, but the whole of the black community is under attack. The whole working class movement must help combat the state's attempt to crush the resistance of black people in Bristol. **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** urges its readers to use every opportunity of gaining support for the defendants and the Defence Committee.

Send money and messages of support to
United Defence Fund,
c/o 146, Grosvenor Road,
St Pauls,
Bristol 2

**DEFEND ST PAULS!
END POLICE ATTACKS ON BLACK
PEOPLE!
SMASH THE RACIST STATE!**



RULING CLASS RESPONSE

Politicians, Labour and Tory, Police Chiefs and newspaper editorials were all insistent in their declarations that the events in St Pauls were not a 'race riot'.

Their insistence on this led them to make the most extraordinarily frank admissions. Bristol Police Chief Constable, Weigh said:

'I don't think there was anything racial about this. It was a riot against authority.'

Tory MP for Bristol, Waldegrave, agreed:

'It was not a race riot in the sense that black and white communities are fighting each other. It is a resistance to the police and this has spread.'

The Guardian added its voice to the chorus:

'Bristol, Notting Hill, Lewisham... none were, in the classic sense of blacks against whites, "race riots"... These were bitter, anti-police riots led by black youths.'

Quite why the ruling class should have been so insistent on telling the world the truth, that what happened in St Pauls was an anti-police anti-state anti-authority riot, at first seems hard to explain. But deeper thought about their reaction provides the answer. They were particularly concerned to deny any 'racial' overtones to the St Pauls events because they cannot afford to admit the truth—that black people had risen up against the police because of the racial oppression they suffer in all aspects of their lives.

Nobody was faster in denying that the St Pauls uprising has any connection with racial oppression than Tony Benn. He said:

'It is important that relations between the police and all the communities should be considered. It is not fair for us to ask the police to carry the burden which arises partly

from rising unemployment, social deprivation and other circumstances in our urban areas and affects communities as a whole not only ethnic communities.'

Benn chooses to forget that three quarters of the black youth of St Pauls are unemployed; that black people suffer the highest unemployment rates, the worst housing and the lowest paid jobs. He also forgets the fact which led initially to the St Pauls uprising—the continual and brutal police harassment which black people are subjected to.

Politicians, Labour and Tory, were also united in their determination that such an uprising should never again occur. They split into the two classic ruling camps about how such prevention should be effected. The two camps are similar to the technique of police questioning known as the hard-man soft-man act. Both hard and soft were equally determined to prevent further rebellion.

Hard-man Eldon Griffiths, Tory MP and adviser to the Police Federation, said:

'If one thing has been demonstrated in Bristol it is the necessity to have in urban areas where

THE FALSE FRIENDS AND ST PAULS

The forces of the British state have regrouped to recover from the defeat in St Pauls. These open enemies of the working class and the oppressed will strengthen the military machine of the British state in an attempt to ensure that it will never again suffer such a humiliating thrashing at the hands of the oppressed.

At the same time the British petit-bourgeois socialist organisations—CP, SWP, IMG etc—have been working to undermine and isolate the struggle in St Pauls. We have long been familiar with the sabotage activities of the British petit bourgeois left. These false friends claim to be on the side to the working class and the oppressed whilst in reality they ally with the racist Labour party and consistently attack and seek to isolate the revolutionary black vanguard.

The response of the false friends to the St Pauls uprising very clearly exposed the racism which lies at the heart of petit bourgeois socialism. The Communist Party of Great Britain chose its words carefully.

'This was not a race riot. It was more in the nature of a primitive uprising...'

Note the terms the CP chooses to use when dealing with the fightback by black people—'primitive uprising'. The mentality is that of a thoroughgoing British imperialist racist but in this case—a frightened one! For the CP is aware that such 'primitive uprisings' are the very stuff of which revolution is made. That is why the CP said fearfully:

'Riots are no answer to the Tories. The inner-city communities (this is the CP's and indeed the ruling class's sickly term for black people) must be helped to organise themselves for real political and social struggle.'

There it is! 'Black people' (sorry 'inner city communities') must be 'helped' to 'organise' themselves. What racist arrogance! Does the CP mean to provide practical and political support for the hard revolutionary struggle ahead? Heavens above—no! By 'help' the CP means:

'They must be won to see that the way forward for solving their problems lies in defeating the Tories and securing a new type of Labour Government.'

'Leave your "primitive" forms of struggle', says the CP. 'Burning down Lloyds bank and fighting the police is very, very primitive,' says the CP. Instead join us in the real 'advanced' struggle to elect another racist Labour Government.

The black vanguard like all the oppressed has already rejected the Labour party as a racist and rotten party. Far from being 'primitive' the uprising in St Pauls showed spontaneous anti-imperialist consciousness. No doubt this is what struck terror into the CP and its ilk.

The 'Militant' group, the Trotskyist wing of the Labour party, also joined in this attack:

'Unless young people can be offered an alternative to the misery of the dole queues, sections of the youth will undoubtedly vent their rage in destructive ways even resorting to smashing up their own communities.'

When the oppressed rise up and gain victory the reactionary 'Militant' lies about smashing up 'their own communities'. They obviously believe that Lloyds bank and the police are part of the 'community'. The Militant is also keen to offer 'help' of the same kind as the CP's. According to them the labour and trade union movement must

'mount a campaign in the area to explain the issues.'

Here we have another group of 'advanced' British social-chauvinists who cannot believe or bear to even consider that black people not only know 'the issues' but are organising to deal with the major 'issue'—the British state. It is they, the black vanguard, whose experience and continued on page 4

The British ruling class is preparing its state machinery—its military and police—for increasingly open and brutal repression against black people.

ARE YOU WITH BENN OR THE H BLOCK MEN?

CLAUDE SEARON (LPL)

DEBATE OF THE DECAYED

On 17 March 1980 the petit bourgeois left joined with the Labour Party in a debate which they arrogantly called the Debate of the Decade. The meeting was one more step on the path of unity between the petit bourgeois socialists and the racist pro-imperialist Labour Party. The petit bourgeois socialists politely debated the terms of this unity with their friends in the Labour Party. *Hands Off Ireland* went to that meeting – not to join in the debate but to expose it.

We went to ensure that the life and death struggles of the oppressed would be part of that meeting. We went to ensure that the 'great democrat', Tony Benn's total silence on the barbarity being inflicted on Irish prisoners of war would be exposed. But above all, we went to expose the complicity of the petit bourgeois left in that silence. The representatives of the petit bourgeois left – Tariq Ali, Paul Foot and Hilary Wainwright – would rather have bitten their own tongues out than say a word about the living death being imposed on the prisoners in H-Block and Armagh jail. This criminal silence was shattered when *Hands Off Ireland* supporters unfurled a huge banner, as Benn rose to speak, bearing one simple question:

ARE YOU WITH BENN OR THE H-BLOCK MEN?

As a result, Benn was forced to state that while he believed in the unity and independence of Ireland he did not support the withdrawal of British troops. He refused to say one word about the H-Blocks. *Hands Off Ireland* thus exposed Benn for the pro-imperialist he is. But his fellow 'debaters', the Paul Foots and Tariq Alis, themselves kept silent on H-Block and made no attack on Benn for his anti-Irish statements. To have done so would have destroyed their long-sought alliance with Benn. The question on the *Hands Off Ireland* banner was answered decisively at this degenerate gathering, this Debate of the Decayed.

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example will 'explain the issues' to the rest of the working class.

The Militant's scheme for mounting a campaign in the area received their answer in St Pauls. On 12 April the local Labour Party Young Socialists turned up with banners and placards to mount a demonstration in defence of those arrested which they, the LPYS, claimed to be organising. They were not allowed to get away with this manoeuvre and were firmly prevented from undertaking this particular 'explanation of the issues.' The SWP was keen to join in the chorus of 'advice':

'The opportunity is here to put across our ideas and solutions to end the degradation of an oppressed community.'

What do these 'ideas and solutions' amount to? *Socialist Worker* gave us valuable insight by reporting verbatim the local Bristol SWP cadre's intervention in St Pauls. The local cadre – Alan – according to the *Socialist Worker* was talking to a group of black youths in St Pauls:

'Alan was just brilliant with this gang'

says *Socialist Worker*. Let us listen to the 'advanced' and 'brilliant' Alan as he puts across the SWP's message.

'Now listen lads, soon there is going to be a demo about Blair Peach. We're going to put a mocked-up coffin in the pig shop. Do you know who Blair Peach was by the way?'

'Right its true you won last night. But we've got to build a real campaign around here.'

Does that not sum it up? Arrogance, contempt and the final dismissal of 'your victory last night' with 'We've got to build a campaign around here'. And let us not forget that the Blair Peach demo which was clearly central to the SWP's 'intervention' in St Pauls had as its

Benn's statements on the Irish question made at the Debate of the Decade, have earned him this issue's Jack Woddis Award for national chauvinism. He won this in the face of close competition from Tariq Ali.

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST No9

Racism, Imperialism and the Working Class

This article shows how racism is rooted in imperialism and that it is the British imperialist state which today is carrying out the most massive and systematic attack on black people. The article concludes that, with the deepening crisis, British imperialism can only intensify racial oppression and meet all resistance with increased repression. An anti-racist movement, therefore, can only be built by an uncompromising struggle against imperialism and its agents in the working class.

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major slogan – 'Disband the SPG'. The SWP, like the CP and the Militant seek to drag revolutionary movement back into the safe paths of social-democratic and reformist politics. The black youths who fought the police in St Pauls were actually undertaking the fight not to call for this or that tinkering reform of the police, not for this or that section to be disbanded, but to smash them! In that they were politically a million light years in advance of the SWP.

The petit bourgeois socialists have shown once again that their intention is to isolate the struggle of the black vanguard. By slandering it and calling it 'backward', they hope to prevent the black vanguard's revolutionary message from influencing other sections of the working class.

It will not succeed! The growing anti-imperialist movement amongst black people will beat off the attacks of its open enemies and its false friends. We have every confidence that in doing so an increasing part of that movement will turn to communist politics and indeed will play the major role in purging the working class movement of the chauvinism and opportunism that imperialism and its allies have bred there.

NARAYAN VICTORY



The demonstrators surge into the courtroom for the Narayan case.

The racist British legal system is still licking its wounds inflicted at Gray's Inn Court on Tuesday 8 April. On that day over 200 black people demonstrated in militant fashion that they would fight back against the injustice daily dished out by the British state. FRFI supporters from London and Leeds were there to show support and solidarity with this struggle.

The occasion was the public hearing of the racist trumped up charges against Rudy Narayan. Rudy Narayan is a well known black barrister. He has defended many black people in the racist British courts, and in particular has worked on some of the most highly publicised cases where the police, courts and legal system have conspired to attack black people. The best known examples are 'The Metro 4', 'The Crickwood 12', 'The Stockwell 10', 'The Leeds 10', 'The Islington 18', the trial of Donar Gomez, and the Roy Sawh and Gaston Shepherd Appeals. In each of these cases he obtained 'Not Guilty' verdicts. On many occasions he has achieved considerable success by thoroughly exposing racist attacks on black people, often with the backing of anti-racist protest outside the courts. He is also known for his attempts at exposing racism within the legal profession. It was because of this that he found himself charged with various 'crimes' – 'crimes' which had they been proved would have seen him barred from his work as a barrister.

Rudy Narayan had complained time and again about racism in the legal profession. At the hearing he cited just one example of racism among the numerous he had come across. This case involved a black prisoner charged with the murder of his wife, who was denied the right to be represented by the barrister of his choice – in this case Mr Narayan. Rudy Narayan's complaints had been consistently ignored and so he took the only step open to him – that of publicly exposing the racism of British so-called justice. He sent copies of a letter, which he had written to the Birmingham Law Society accusing members of racist practice, to two Birmingham newspapers. Four of the six charges against Mr Narayan were connected with this letter and arose from complaints made by Mr Philip Cox, then President of Birmingham Law Society. The charges were 'Professional misconduct' and 'Conduct unbecoming a barrister'. The two other charges against him concerned an incident at Birmingham Crown Court, when a Judge Potter had misled the jury about Mr Narayan's defence. Rudy Narayan rightly objected to this illegal and discriminatory treatment but it was Mr Narayan who was put on trial not Judge Potter. Just as in many other cases where black people have defended themselves against racist attack and then found that it is they who end up facing charges, so Rudy Narayan, in attempting to expose racism in the legal profession found himself on trial while the real criminals were free to carry on their racist 'business as usual'.

Black people from up and down the country were not prepared to sit back and see Rudy Narayan silenced. For there is no doubt that this was the intention of the guardians of the British state's legal system. 200 demonstrators present came from Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Cardiff and London to demonstrate their disgust with British racist 'justice'. However the

bar not content with trying to strangle opposition to the racism inherent in their ranks, tried to go one stage further. The public hearing was held in one of the smallest possible rooms and even the seating was arranged in order to minimise numbers. The morning session opened with the announcement that there would only be room for 59 people. In fact around 75 people got in to witness the hearing while the rest mounted a picket outside. Placards, banners and slogans proclaimed 'Like Bristol, the bar will explode!', 'Stop this racist trial'.

At lunchtime, while the press, like vultures, swooped down on Mr Narayan, groups of supporters gathered in the courtyard to complain about being excluded from this 'public' hearing. Bewildered officials could be seen spying out of windows, as heated argument and slogans enlivened the usually tranquil square. As a door was opened there were shouts of 'This is a public hearing', 'Make it public'. Stewards trying to keep one side of the double doors locked had to jump out of the way as the locked door was battered open, the other one came off its hinges and a glass panel was smashed. No one paid any attention to the bleating appeals of the bourgeois press for priority treatment. Many had come a long way to demonstrate their solidarity and they were determined to do just that. As the crowd surged forward, the voice of an official inside the courtroom whispered 'There aren't enough seats'. With one voice the crowd answered 'We'll stand!' Officialdom looked on nervously as first the seats, then the aisles and finally the limited space at the back was completely filled up. There can rarely have been a more public public hearing in the dreary annals of British legal history!

Under some pressure the afternoon's proceedings began with the withdrawal of the first two charges concerning the Birmingham letters. Two down, Four to go! Mr Philip Cox then outlined his complaints to a background of intermittent chants from outside. As part of his defence Rudy Narayan explained how his many complaints against racism had been suppressed. Philip Cox began to get very hot under the collar, especially when Mr Narayan pointed out that a lawyer against whom he had made a particular complaint had written to his friend, Mr Philip Cox in an attempt to cover up the complaint. Mr Cox denied this and denied that the lawyer was even a friend. Mr Narayan, now holding up a copy of the letter, asked him if he could therefore explain why the lawyer had begun the letter 'Dear Philip', signed it 'George' and then sent it to his home address and not to his office. He also challenged him to deny that he had known the lawyer since 1951! Sneers and laughter echoed round the small courtroom. It was all apparently too much for the snivelling Cox who, now hot and flustered, asked if he could hold up proceedings to have a glass of water. It was clear that none of Mr Narayan's other complaints had been investigated. With most of his allegations in shreds, Philip Cox looked very relieved to finally get out of the courtroom. The court adjourned for a decision on charges 3 and 4 to be made. Most of those seated simply ignored the deferential practice of standing up when the President and his men rose to leave the room. Likewise the 'No Smoking' signs might as well not have been there. Returning, the verdict was announced. Not Proved. The crowd cheered and clapped with obvious delight. Four down, Two to go!

The two final charges related to Mr Narayan's alleged discourtesy to a judge. Mr Narayan demonstrated that in fact Judge Potter had broken the law by his remarks to a jury but the good judge was not being taken to task for his law-breaking. The verdict returned on these last two charges was that they were proved. There were shouts of 'Racist' from the crowd. It transpired however that the 'punishment' was to be a schoolboy's ticking off. In the face of decisive protest all six charges had been consigned to the dustbin where they belonged. As the jubilant crowd emerged from the court, clenched fists were raised. As Rudy Narayan put it 'This was a victory for the black community'. Again black people have shown that they will fight back to defend themselves.

Alison Scott

BLACK RESISTANCE IN OLDHAM

On Saturday 12 April, nearly 1,000 Asian workers from Oldham marched to the centre of town to stop the planned National Front demonstration from Gas Street to the Civic Centre. The imperialist press censored the events of the day. Coming so soon after the Bristol, St Pauls, revolt, it decided to suppress news of this latest act of resistance.

The 10,000 black people in Oldham, living in the Westwood and Glodwick districts and working in the local textile mills are constantly subjected to vicious oppression by the police and the National Front. It was in Oldham that Abdul Azad, whose case we have reported, was threatened with deportation. It was in Oldham where the police, using the pretext of investigating Abdul Azad's case, conducted mass passport raids. It is in Oldham that Munir Ahmed was arrested and taken to Risley Remand Centre threatened with deportation for allegedly 'illegal immigration'. This despite having correct papers. Alongside this police oppression, the National Front, with full police complicity has been trying to impose a reign of terror in the Asian areas. Gangs of NF supporters have petrol bombed Asian homes, beaten them up with iron bars and sticks. Two Asian people have been so badly beaten that they have been sent to hospital and the President of Oldham Bangladesh Association not only had his doors and window smashed by an NF gang, but was beaten up in front of his own house!

Such is the police/NF regime in Oldham. And when news of a National Front march for 12 April was announced, the Asian community decided to resist. Columns of Asian marchers from Glodwick and Westwood converged onto the centre of town to proceed to the NF assembly point in Gas Street. They marched, young and old, with tremendous militancy. The NF were to be taught a lesson.

Then the police intervened. They blocked off the routes to Gas Street. At all costs they were going to defend the National Front, to prevent a humiliating defeat of the National Front, for what better weapon to use to terrorise black people into submission than these 'police without uniforms'? On Gas Street, the Asian workers charged the police cordon. They attempted to break it. The police responded. They moved in beating people, dragging them by the hair across the street and arrested 37 people including a **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** supporter.

At this point, at the point when Asian people were confronting the police, at the point where the police were attempting to break up the march, the false friends, despicable and cowardly, came to the police assistance. Pete Evans, a prominent member of Oldham IMG was appealing to the crowds... 'We are here to oppose the National Front, not to fight the police'. Never mind that without breaking the police cordons, no attack on the NF was possible, never mind that the police were attacking the Asian demonstrators as a means of defending the NF, the IMG called for an end to the fight against the police! And there is one and only one reason for this cowardly and treacherous behaviour. The IMG is not prepared to fight and defeat that bastion of British imperialism - the police.

This attitude was in stark contrast to the revolutionary spirit of the Asian marchers, whose leaders denounced the police

'You are nothing but the big National Front, and those behind you whom you are defending are the police without uniforms.'

Whilst the assorted groups of disorganised petit bourgeois deserted the scene of battle, or stood as onlookers, the marchers succeeded in evading police cordons and proceeded to hold a concluding rally nearby the civic centre.

FRFI SUPPORTER ARRESTED IN OLDHAM

An FRFI supporter was amongst those arrested during the Oldham anti-racist demo on 12 April. He was thrown to the ground by the police suffering a bruise to the head and abrasions to his arm, had his shirt ripped off his back, and his arms were twisted behind his back to the extent that he couldn't lift his left arm the next day. All this for calling upon his fellow demonstrators to link arms in the face of an unprovoked rampage by the police. He has since been charged with using threatening, abusive or insulting words with intent to provoke a breach of the peace.

FRFI Supporters will continue to support mobilisations against the racism of the police and the NF in spite of this type of harassment. A Defence Fund has been established to meet the 37 defendants' fines - expected to total £4,000.

Send your donation to:
Oldham Defence Fund,
PO Box 72, Oldham OL1 4RT

DEFEND MUNIR AHMED

A Defence Committee has been set up in Oldham to defend Munir Ahmed from deportation. Munir's 'crime' was not telling the immigration authorities that he was married - a question that he was never asked! When he attended an 'interview' at Manchester Airport, on 19 March about the admission of his wife and child, he was asked no questions but instead arrested as an illegal immigrant! Munir was released on bail on 18 April after spending a month in Risley Remand Centre. This shows just how far the British State will go in its racist campaign of deportation - any excuse is sufficient. The Munir Ahmed Defence Committee is mounting a campaign against his deportation and **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** will be active in the campaign.

Messages of support and donations to:

Munir Ahmed Defence Committee
PO Box 72 Oldham OL1 4RT

RICHARD CAMPBELL another death in custody

Richard Campbell, a 19 year old black youth from South London was found dead in his cell at Ashford Remand Centre on 31 March. Richard was in custody for 1 month before he died. He was moved from Brixton Police Station to Lewes Prison, and then to Ashford after being convicted of attempted burglary at Camberwell Court.

Incredibly, his family were not informed of his detention until they were told he was dead. Richard lost 3 stone in weight during his 3 weeks in Ashford and his Probation Officer, who saw him 12 days before he died, said he showed symptoms of being injected with Largactil.

What happened to Richard in Ashford? The Friends of Richard Campbell Committee has been set up to find out.

Contact the committee at 135a Lavender Hill, London SW11, or phone 01 672 9643, if you can make a donation or help to build the campaign.

Dear Sir,

I have just read for the first time your publication **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** I was handed a copy in Hyde Park during a 'Troops Out of Ireland' rally. I am sufficiently impressed to ask to be put on your mailing list for the next ten copies.

I am a black man. Your paper discussed the two issues which have long interested me and which are virtually ignored in the dialogue between the major British capitalist parties - i.e. Labour, Tories and Liberal parties. These issues are race relations and Northern Ireland.

It seems that with respect to race relations the hypocritical British politicians are playing a dangerous game of pretence. They are pretending that there ISN'T a race problem. For example, the events in Bristol were dismissed as just another disturbance and it was said by the Home Secretary that it did not amount to a race riot. They are evading the issue, and refusing to acknowledge that there are fundamental racial injustices in this Society and to put those evils right I believe a major racial explosion therefore is inevitable.

You touched upon issues which have long been a 'bone of contention' with the black community - police brutality, racist immigration laws, 'SUS', the National Front etc. These issues are always ignored in the dialogue between the left and the right in this country; even those in, what you called, the 'petit bourgeois' Socialist left in Britain who turned out to be a major disappointment.

These same Socialists, also for example, justify the imperialist presence in Northern Ireland. I heard Tony Benn say that he did not think that British troops should be withdrawn immediately from Northern Ireland. And he calls himself a 'socialist'! This is why there are many black people who believe, quite rightly, that most English politicians, regardless as to their affiliations (certainly those in the 'established' major parties) are deep seated RACIALISTS. They believe the British Race is superior to the blacks and non-white people and to the Irish. And this contempt is reflected in their actions and their statements.

As a genuine Socialist, I have taken a broad interest in international affairs and I see everything in its true perspective. I see links between most of the issues involved. For example, I have long been a sympathiser of the Irish Republican movement in Northern Ireland and I can accept that the IRA freedom fighters are fighting the same enemy as the blacks in Southern Africa - British imperialism. And many black people feel the same way and recognise that the things that the British imperialists have done in Ireland are shameful and disgraceful. We do not see the IRA as 'terrorists' at all.

Thank you for supporting the black struggle in England and for highlighting many of the racial injustices in your paper. May I say - keep up the good work.

Yours,
T Jones, Tottenham, London N17

Dear Editor FRFI,

I write to tell you about my experience in Leeds, of how difficult it is to get jobs in this city as a black person. I found it difficult to get a job and turned to a scheme at the YMCA Training for Life (TFL). I thought that joining this scheme jobs will be much easier to get but soon my ideas were changed. I learned what being black is about. On the scheme you are put on placements. You have four in twelve months each lasting 3 months. My first placement was in a Lady's boutique. The prejudice stood out that much you could touch it. I complained time and time again but my placement officer she didn't listen. The manageress was supposed to have trained me to become a good sales assistant but I had to learn everything myself. The things they made me do was to clean and run up and down. They would shout at me in front of customers and they would never let me talk to my friends when they came but they could. They always gave me an early lunch while others could choose their own. My friend was given the sack and then I was left to do all the worst work, the running up and down and hauling around a big

industrial Hoover. I got into trouble for not lying to customers. The owner, she was really bad, she was really rude. I believe they think 'Roots' is still on. After I left this racist placement, I went to another shop. There was a really bad manageress. She gave me a huge section of jeans to tidy myself. I had only been there three days and I was doing very well with sales but the people there wouldn't talk to me. When I had been there a week the manageress called me to her office. She asked me how I liked it there and then gave a sneer. She then asked 'Do you wear deodorant?' I asked her 'why?'. She replied that there is a funny smell in the shop. I then said 'If there is a funny smell in the shop it certainly isn't me.' The phone rang then and she told me to leave the room. She said she would see me later, but if she had I would have told her that the funny smell was because her nose was too near her own backside.

What I am trying to say is that working in town in this racist city is bad for a black person whether a girl or a boy. It's difficult, you're treated like dirt and if you let them walk all over you they would.

Yours faithfully,
An unsatisfied job hunter, Leeds

Dear Comrades,

I would like to congratulate the RCG on bringing out a paper which supports the working class. None of the other so called communist papers supports the struggles of the oppressed, and working class.

Black and immigrant workers are in the front line of the struggle against British Imperialism. They have shown the way forward to workers in this country.

Their action in Bristol by smashing the police and the burnings of Bank and post office drew support from the white working class in St Pauls. This is the way forward. This is the only language that the Bosses, MPs, Judges and Police understand.

For I know that as a low paid council worker British Democracy must be torn apart at the seams to enable me and my family to have a decent wage, a decent house and a decent life.

Yours fraternally,
Andrew Simmonds, Caldicot Depot NUPE

Dear FRFI

Last night I went to a meeting at Leeds University addressed by miners' leader and self-styled 'socialist' Arthur Scargill. After a glib and self-congratulatory speech, resounding with revolutionary phrases, clarion calls to 'defy the law' and denunciations of capitalist immorality and American chauvinism, he was asked his first question of the night, 'Mr Scargill, you have attacked American jingoism, what is your opinion of British imperialism's role in Ireland?'

Scargill coughed, wriggled nervously in his seat, and mumbled that embarrassed phrase we so often hear from the Labour 'left', 'Ireland is probably the most difficult problem in British politics', he told us. 'It will not be solved by violence or dictat.' Ireland, the most difficult problem in British politics? Mr Scargill! Britain is Ireland's problem. One which will not be solved through violence or dictat? Tell that to British imperialism, Mr Scargill! Tell that to the custodians of the H-Blocks, the politicians in Whitehall, tell it to your murderous friends in the British Labour Party, who for five long years directed the beating, torture and assassination of Irish Republicans.

This was not all. Mr Scargill has Irish ancestors, and this gives him the right to announce that though there may be many Protestants in Ireland, and many Catholics, there are very few Christians. What a disgusting, racist insult to the Irish people. This, from a man who calls himself a socialist. A socialist? The man is shot through with that very 'capitalist immorality' he feels so free to chide. This great friend of the left is nothing less than a charlatan, a reactionary hypocrite, an imperialist hack and a false friend of the oppressed.

WG, Leeds

BLACK BOLSHEVIK

Black Bolshevik. Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist. Harry Haywood. Liberator Press, Chicago, Illinois. 1978.

This is a big book by a big man. Born in 1898, the son of slaves, Harry Haywood was for 36 years a member of the Communist Party of the United States of America, the CPUSA. The history in this book, the history of a lifetime's struggles, the history of the CPUSA is the history of 20th century America.

It was in the 1890's that American imperialism really took off. The Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, much of South America and most Caribbean countries were conquered by American imperialism within a decade. When Harry Haywood speaks of imperialism he knows exactly what it means. The looting and stealing of the wealth of other countries, the political control by force of other countries, and the deliberate restriction and prevention of the economic development of national economies is the character of American (as well as British) imperialism.

American imperialism abroad was also carried on within America. Just as imperialism oppresses external nations, so it keeps the black Americans, and other minority groups, in a position of special oppression. In the Southern States black people were excluded from basic democratic rights by the Jim Crow system, dating from the Hayes-Tilden Gentlemen's Agreement of 1877. This baldly stated that no black person has any rights that need be recognised by white persons. In the industrial North of America, black labour was excluded from the trade unions, from the more skilled jobs, from housing, and pushed into ghettos. Black people were used as a pool of reserve labour — to be hired last and fired first, and brought in to break strikes. This was American imperialism on the home front. Many of the laws which were used to specifically oppress and exclude black people have been thrown out. This gain was won by the heroic struggles of the black masses in the 1920s and 1930s and again in the 1960s. But the legal victories which cost so many lives and so many years of struggle are only a limited gain, like the independence of a country from Britain or America which is independent in name only because it is still dominated by Western capitalism. American black people know that this legal equality is a pretence. The reality was shown by the ghetto rebellions, 24 in 1964, 38 in 1966 and in 1967 128 and in 1968 131.

Harry Haywood spent a lifetime fighting for the liberation of the Afro-American population. He was also a communist. For him it was clear from his youth that the racist state of America — racist at home and abroad — was racist because capitalism thrives on dividing the working class and dominating nations. Within the imperialist homeland of America there is a strata of workers who gain in status and material living standards from the violent and vicious repression carried out by imperialism. In America, the trade union leadership and large sections of the white working class make up this privileged layer. They live off 'the ability of the imperialists and the labour aristocracy to grant concessions', in Harry Haywood's words. Their democratic rights and living standards are won at the expense of others' enslavement.

As a communist Harry Haywood understood that this all-powerful American imperialism is a decaying system. In the need for ever-greater expansion, in the search for ever-greater profits, capitalism creates the forces that will destroy it. The exploited nations from without and the oppressed workers from within have the historic task of joining forces to deal the death-blow to American capitalism by a joint anti-imperialist struggle.

Harry Haywood and the Communist International

Harry Haywood gained a full understanding of the nature of imperialism from his studies of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party at the International Schools in Moscow in the 1920s. It was the result of his years there, meeting representatives from India, Indonesia, Korea, the Philippines, Persia (Iran), Egypt, Arabs from N Africa and the Middle East, China, Japan and Africa that Harry Haywood became a thorough internationalist. He was a major contributor to the revolutionary communist position on race and class. All his life he supported the growing national liberation struggles of oppressed peoples. 'Genuine communists', he said, 'of course, must distinguish between the nationalism of the

oppressor nations and that of the oppressed'. The just national aspirations of the Irish and South African black peoples, among others, were actively supported by Harry Haywood. But he had to continually fight those so-called communists who spoke of pure socialism that knew no national boundaries — the Utopia of the future not the real struggles of the day. And he also clearly saw that these Utopian socialists just so happened to be white and middle-class and from privileged countries or strata. For example, in 1928 at the 6th Congress of the Comintern, the white CP delegates from South Africa were more concerned about the position of the white minority than the black struggle for liberation and independence. They feared, they said, that the slogan of such a struggle would be 'Drive the whites into the sea'. In the words of Harry Haywood, 'The cat was let out of the bag, and a mangy, chauvinistic creature it was'.

Equally, the delegates from the British Communist Party, from the oldest and most experienced oppressor nation in the world, defended the idea that imperialism would aid the industrial development of the colonised world. It was no surprise that those who represented a working class, sections of whom were an aristocracy of labour, should come out with such a reactionary position. Both South African and British delegates were roundly defeated in the debate about the nature of imperialism and support for national liberation struggles.

In the case of South Africa Harry Haywood played a vital role in the formulation of the Black Republic thesis, a thesis which allowed the revolutionaries within the Communist Party of South Africa to place the national question on a firm revolutionary footing. In the terms of this thesis, the right of the oppressed to self-determination was interpreted to mean the right of the oppressed to the entire territory of South Africa, not just one part of it. Moses Kotane, as well as other revolutionary communists were able to turn the Black Republic thesis into a weapon against both landlordism and national oppression in South Africa and therefore

ultimately against imperialism itself.

Black liberation and the CPUSA

The main question which occupies Harry Haywood throughout his years in the CP was the position of black people in the USA. Here his story is a brave but tragic one. For long periods in the 1920s and 1930s it seemed that the Party had arrived at a correct revolutionary understanding on the question of race and class. It built massive struggles and united many thousands of workers, black and white around demands that arose from the conditions of black workers North and South. On his return from the 6th Congress of the Comintern in 1929, Harry Haywood was armed with a revolutionary position on race and imperialism.

'The new position grounded the issue of Black liberation firmly in the fight of the American people for full democratic rights and in the struggle of the working class for socialism. The struggle for equality is in and of itself a revolutionary question, because the special oppression of black people is the main prop of imperialist domination over the entire working class and the masses of exploited American people. Therefore, blacks and the working class as a whole are mutual allies. The fight of blacks for national liberation, quite apart from humanitarian considerations, must be supported as it is a special feature of the struggle for the emancipation of the whole American working class.'

The message is clear, the black people of America are doubly oppressed, as workers and also racially. Their struggle against the American state, landowners, big business corporations and banks is the key struggle, the leading and truly revolutionary struggle of the working class. While a small section of black people may be bought off to form a minute middle class, the continual wage slavery, utter economic dependence and powerlessness of the masses of black workers shows the true nature of capitalist class society, its necessary and vicious exploitation of labour power and its need for a reserve army of cheap labour. Vast sections of the white American working class have obtained their relative employment security and living standards because of the continuing enslavement of the black population.

Harry Haywood, with a handful of other black and white members of the CPUSA understood the dual oppression of black people. They had to deal with those who saw the position only from one side or the other. There were many movements in the 1920s, and indeed in every decade, which viewed the situation that blacks found themselves in as a question of racial oppression alone. These movements, the most famous of which was the Universal Negro Improvement Association of Marcus Garvey, were dedicated to black nationalism, the complete separation of black people from white society. The most popular form that this separation took was the various 'Back to Africa' organisations which gained the support of many thousands of blacks, especially at times of deep despair when the class struggle was on the retreat and violently repressed. Many of these movements, including Garvey's, were in favour of capitalism, and unwittingly played into the hands of white racists.

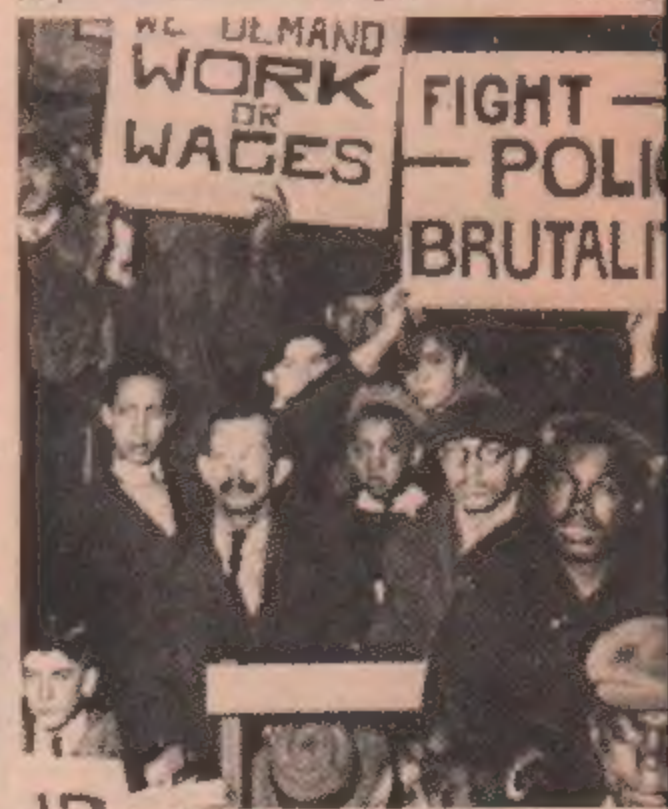
Then there were those sections within the CPUSA who denied the special oppression of black people — racism. They tended to view all such matters as 'pure' class questions and were deliberately blind to the white chauvinism and white aristocracy of labour within the working class as a whole. These reactionaries not only



ignored the leading role of the black struggle, but did so because they were themselves riddled with white supremacist ideas. As a matter of fact, the Party had to conduct regular fights against the racism of its own membership. This section actually ended up supporting the nationalist, pro-imperialist labour and trade union movement which dominates in the United States today.

In addition to black separatism and white chauvinism, Harry Haywood had to conduct a struggle against organisations like the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP). Such organisations, involving both black and white reformists, were usually funded by the state or big business interests and were concerned to undermine the living, militant and justly violent struggles of the times.

On his return from the 6th Congress in Moscow, Harry Haywood worked with the Party's National Negro Commission. Armed with the Leninist understanding of imperialism, he put his efforts into directing the CP to



Mass meeting of the International Labor Defense, which organised Scottsboro Boys. Both photographs on the page from *Black Bolshevik* organise around the black struggle. Rapidly a nation-wide movement in support of the Scottsboro Boys developed which mobilised massive protests against the lynch law social conditions of the Southern States. At the same time, an armed and militant Share-Cropper Movement was developing in which black and white poor farmers of the South defended themselves against the robber baron methods of the big banks which mortgaged every inch of soil and every hoe and spade. In the North the fight in the mines, factories and workshops against conditions, wages and the abuse of black labour continued to be organised by Communist party cells, the most militant workers.

The Programme of the Communist Party on the Negro Question in the USA was a simple one though fraught with problems. In the North,

the Party... on the que... struggles... 'Self-Dete... Black Belt... number o... population... It was wro... to establi... of Americ... then were... they were... Africa or... were semi... of being t... land and... communis... the share-o... proletarian... racism and... the USA... tionary fo... national o... imperialism... actual geo... would have... which wou... imperialism...

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to organise its members and build a union of Civil Rights and industrial workers in the South, the slogan should be for 'segregation' and the creation of an independent and self governing Southern states where the black made up about 70% of the entire population. This programme can be criticised. At that time to call on black people to form a new country in the United States was a new idea. Although most of the black people were on the land in one way or another, not peasants (as they were in South India for example) but rather they were proletarians who were in the process of being thrown into the pool of unemployed factory workers. The task facing the CPUSA was rather to link up the struggle of the black people with the struggle of the white workers who were already fighting against industrial capitalism elsewhere in the South. This would have provided a revolutionary basis for the linking-up of the struggle with the struggle against imperialism and for socialism. The setting-up of separate black self-governing areas meant the setting up of Bantustans, which would have played into the hands of the CPUSA on the Southern front. This was almost exactly mirrored seven years later by the Trotskyist movement. None of the other movements, except the CPUSA, were able to provide a viable alternative. But Harry Haywood stuck to his support of the Southern CP because it was the strongest way that Black liberation is the essence of a revolutionary position in the South. The soiled and dirty 'democracy' of the South means nothing until the actual political conditions of the black people in the most under-developed sectors of the South are confronted, not as a secondary issue, but as the central one and Harry Haywood chose this programme as the ground of the reactionary elements.

Defeat of US communism

The story of the CPUSA is the story of



thousands of people in support of the CPUSA. The liquidation, as a separate party, of the efforts of revolutionary communists to maintain a Bolshevik tradition in the Southern Sharecroppers' Movement and closed down active trade unions in the North and turned to a national chauvinistic line at the outbreak of World War 2. In the 1930s, communists were active in mobilising demonstrations of black and white workers against Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia. By 1957 the 16th Party Convention in New York support the struggle for independent America in Puerto Rico. The CPUSA was killed off because of those who refused to make the struggle against white chauvinism and opportunism

central to the building of a revolutionary party. It hoped to merge with liberal tendencies to form a third American party to stand against Republicans and Democrats, the Progressive Party. Bitterly, inevitably, it was exactly at this time, the end of the 1940s and the early 1950s that Cold War politics seized all American institutions. In the final assault of American imperialism for control of the world economy, America turned viciously once again on the socialist countries. The party which had deliberately thrown away its power base in the workers' struggles was harassed, imprisoned and pursued by FBI agents until it was impossible to openly take up any anti-American activities. It was outlawed for the second time in its history in 1950.

The major contribution that Harry Haywood makes in his autobiography is to describe the relation of revolutionary communists to the spontaneous revolutionary movement of the oppressed. The main role of the communist organisation in relation to the revolutionary upsurge is to defend and support that movement. First and foremost it must strengthen the anti-imperialist section, the most advanced section and prevent it being subordinated to liberalism and the American middle-class. It must above all fight the opportunists both within and without the movement who will divert, destroy and actually disarm the militancy of the masses.

The communist organisation must wage a relentless struggle against the isolation, defeat and destruction of the vanguard movement. These are the lessons of a lifetime learned by Harry Haywood and they come home with particular power when he deals with the Black Power and Black Panther movements of the 1960s. He writes that sections of the Black Power movement were bought off by 'a thoroughly reformist trend which was backed directly by the imperialists. This new Black elite moved systematically to take over the movement, sap its revolutionary potential and restrict it to goals which US capitalism was willing to concede.' The progressive and anti-imperialist trend within the Black Power movement was systematically destroyed 'by a growing apparatus of repression - FBI, CIA, National Guard and Army Intelligence - which murdered, jailed and suppressed many unco-operative leaders.'

This two-pronged tactic of buying off the opportunists and physically destroying the revolutionaries like Malcolm X and George Jackson could happen because no genuine communist movement existed to prevent the isolation, demoralisation and decay of the revolutionary upsurge. In the words of Harry Haywood,

'I believe that if we had had a revolutionary party in the sixties that much of the spontaneity and reactionary nationalism of the period could have been combatted. Undoubtedly, the ruling class would still have tried to split the Black Power movement, but the left wing would not have nearly been wiped out as an organised force in the Black community. If the CPUSA hadn't liquidated communist work in the South and in the factories, the sixties would have seen a consolidated proletarian force emerge in the Black Belt and the ghettos. The communist forces could have come out of the Revolt with developed cadres rooted in the factories and communities, with credibility among the masses.'

From reading *Black Bolshevik* we learn that communists have a task of the utmost gravity; to defend the proletarian element within the spontaneous movement of the oppressed and to strengthen the anti-imperialist sections. This means a rigorous and determined assault against opportunism and white chauvinism within the labour movement. 'No concession to chauvinism!' that is the banner under which Harry Haywood fought. Notwithstanding his inadequacies and many errors, we salute this great fighter and welcome this book as a timely contribution to the ongoing debate in this country on the question of racism, opportunism and the anti-imperialist struggle.

Sue Davidson.

FRONTLINE

DEFEND ZIMBABWE

In our previous issue, we saluted the glorious anti-imperialist victory of ZANU and ZAPU. A bloody blow to the imperialists! An occasion for joy for anti-imperialists throughout the world! In concluding our article, we warned!

'In the months ahead as the wounded imperialist hawks circle Zimbabwe, the need for solidarity action in Britain will be as urgent as it was during the Lancaster House talks and the elections. All the anti-imperialists in Britain must rally both to celebrate and to defend the historic victory of the Patriotic Front.'

The victory has been achieved. But imperialism is preparing to counter-attack. It is preparing its plans to overturn the victory of the people, for it is not prepared to tolerate its ill-gotten gains, the wealth it has robbed from the people being swept from its hands. And to defend its plunder it will use any means it can to deny the people the fruits of their victory.

And its most powerful weapon is its deadly stranglehold on the economy of Zimbabwe. Seventy per cent of the economy, valued at £1.5 billion is controlled by imperialism. Over half of this is in the hands of British imperialism and South Africa. During the 15 years of UDI, foreign investment in Zimbabwe increased by 300 per cent, and British capital stock rose from £200m to a staggering £717m! The Zimbabwean economy, in the words of the *Financial Times* is: 'one of the most heavily dependent on external capital in black Africa'. And the imperialists are using this to full effect. Any attempt to nationalise imperialist capital and they threaten to retaliate. Zimbabwe now has a foreign debt of £250 million, over two thirds owing to South Africa, for its assistance to the reactionary Smith regime! Any attempt to cancel this debt and the imperialists threaten to retaliate. And the means of retaliation they have. Their grip on the Zimbabwean economy means that they can destroy it and reduce the people to even more abominable squalor than they have suffered under imperialist rule. In addition, imperialism can rely on South Africa for military assistance against the Zimbabwean people. Already South Africa is militarily prepared to move against the new Zimbabwean Republic.

In these conditions, the people of Zimbabwe face an almost impossible task in reconstructing the devastated economy and in overcoming the product of decades of barbaric oppression, especially that inflicted on the masses during their liberation war - poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, slum housing and education. The war has left a million people homeless, a quarter of a million as refugees, 75 per cent of the already inadequate clinics and schools have been closed down, black unemployment is soaring, wages are below starvation level.

But efforts to meet the justified expectations of the black people of Zimbabwe who fought so heroically will be met by threats and blackmail. With imperialism threatening the people of Zimbabwe, holding over it the awesome weapon of starvation, economic blockades and further war, the duty of anti-imperialists is clear: **Defend the historic victory of the Patriotic Front! Crush imperialist attempts to limit the freedom of Zimbabwe!**

These most elementary principles of anti-imperialism and internationalism are being trampled in the mud by the petit-bourgeois socialists of the SWP, IMG, RCT and their ilk. Before the victory of the Patriotic Front, they constantly criticised and denounced it (see FRFI 1 and 2). Since

the landslide victory of the Patriotic Front they have continued their vicious, dirty and snide attacks. **Socialist Challenge**, the newspaper of the IMG, immediately after the election said:

'The ZANU-PF election manifesto is remarkably similar to those of the other main African parties... Private enterprise will be allowed... until "circumstances are ripe for socialist change" - a sentiment vague enough to grace a Labour Manifesto.

Far from marshalling his forces to smash the white power structures... has enthusiastically taken part in... attempts to "integrate" elements of the two guerilla armies into the white security forces... On land reform... it talks only of "resettling" blacks on underused white land - a plan supported by the white farmers.

White fears of Mugabe are therefore largely delusions.'

Socialist Worker, the SWP's organ of opportunism said:

'... Robert Mugabe reassured the white settlers... Things were going to be all right... Zimbabwe would be another Kenya where white wealth and privilege have survived the installation of a black government.

Even worse, Mugabe is talking of a "good neighbour" policy towards South Africa.'

The IMG's comparison of ZANU-PF with the Labour Party reveals the complete hypocrisy of the petit bourgeois left. The IMG is second to none in covering up for the Labour Party and, indeed, wants to affiliate to that Party. These hypocrites have one standard for the oppressed and quite another for the imperialist Labour Party.

The petit bourgeois left did its level best to isolate the Zimbabwean movement with its constant attacks on ZANU and ZAPU. By doing so, they strengthened the hands of the imperialists. Then, after the victory, they turn round and attack ZANU-PF for the problems which arise directly from that isolation and, in particular, from the complete failure of the British movement to support and defend the Zimbabwean people. The Zimbabwean revolution faces massive problems of reconstruction whilst the apartheid butchers are massed on its doorstep ready to strike at any time. The Zimbabwean revolution needs our support, solidarity and defence against all its enemies.

Eddie Abrahams.

IMPERIALISTS INVADE IRAN

Friday 25 April saw the complete failure of American imperialism's first effort at direct military intervention against the Iranian Revolution since the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. That American imperialism has been reduced to this blundering display of sabre rattling is a tribute to the determination of the Iranian people.

The American military operation made it clear that the real issue was not, and is not, the 'hostages'. The real issue is the re-establishment of imperialist domination in Iran.

Throughout the world imperialism is fighting a rear-guard action to preserve its existence in the face of mounting victories by the oppressed. The attack on Iran was one effort to reverse the tide. Everything else had failed. Only military threat remained open. The Iranian people have already shown that this too will fail because they understand that the future of their revolution is at stake - and they will defend it with their lives.

The issue for communists in Britain is clear: defend the Iranian revolution against imperialist attack. This is the key task. Yet the petit bourgeois left in response to American imperialist aggression has whined about the threat to, not the Iranian Revolution, but so-called 'world peace'.

This is how the *Morning Star* writes about possible British involvement in the invasion:

'The point is, however, that whether the government was informed, consulted, or in some other way found out, Mrs Thatcher knew what Carter had in mind and that it could be the first step in the nuclear suicide of Britain. And she did nothing to stop it. What a patriot!' (*Morning Star* 28 April 1980)

In other words, the CP's Hands Off Iran campaign has nothing to do with the interests of the Iranian people but rather with the protection of Britain - to be more precise the British petit bourgeoisie - from nuclear war. The eruption of 'concern' for Iran turns out to be nothing but panic - the panic of a hysterical petit bourgeoisie half-crazed with visions of a nuclear holocaust. The attack on the Iranian Revolution becomes a threat to 'world peace'. 'World peace' is not an abstraction - imperialism is constantly at war against the oppressed. The only road to world peace is through the destruction of imperialism - which is what the Iranian masses are fighting for.

These hypocrites who now call for Hands Off Iran have consistently refused to call for Hands Off Ireland and to support those who are fighting to get British Hands Off Ireland. The Iranian people will judge the British left by the role it plays in opposing British imperialism and supporting all those who fight British imperialism. Until those who are now calling for Hands Off Iran also call for Hands Off Ireland and give unconditional support to the Irish people's struggle, we will continue to believe that they are simply worried about their own skins.

The American invasion was an attempt to intimidate the Iranian people. Although why anyone should think that the spectacle of 'highly-trained' American troops playing terminal dodgems with each other in the Iranian desert should frighten a people who survived the long years of torture and murder under the Shah is anyone's guess.

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! extends its fraternal solidarity to the people of Iran. We have every confidence that they, supported by the growing world wide anti-imperialist movement, will defeat any attempt to reestablish imperialist control and bring their revolution to a successful conclusion.

ANWAR DITTA

ANWAR DITTA - I WILL FIGHT TO THE LAST BREATH

In previous issues of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*, we have reported the case of Anwar Ditta whose family has been cruelly split by British imperialism's immigration controls. For over four years, the Tory government and the previous Labour government refused Anwar Ditta's three children permission to come from Pakistan and join their parents in England. The children have been refused entry and the family broken up because:

'the couple had not established that they were the parents of the three children.'

The evidence is insufficient, declares the Home Office. The South African apartheid regime divides and destroys black families. British imperialism does the same, but covers up with legal jargon - 'insufficient evidence'!

It was in order to fight this racist attempt to destroy Anwar Ditta's family that the Anwar Ditta Defence Committee was formed in December 1979. Six months later, the campaign is at an important turning point. On Monday 28 April, the Immigration Appeal to hear Anwar Ditta's case was adjourned to 16 May. Under no illusions as to the racism of the Appeal Court, in which 80% of cases are lost, the Defence Committee is organising a picket on the day. The British state will be warned - unless Anwar Ditta's family is re-united, the struggle will escalate.

That the appeal date is on 16 May and not at some indefinite time in the future is entirely due to the campaign fought by the Defence Committee. It has forced the Home Office to give Anwar's case 'top priority' and bring the hearing forward, steps highly unusual in such cases.

The campaign which began modestly with mass petitioning in Rochdale has gone from strength to strength. Large and successful pickets have been organised in Rochdale and Manchester on the occasion of Timothy Raison's visits and in London supporters of Anwar Ditta organised a picket of the Home Office. Regular street meetings in Rochdale have revealed great support amongst the Asian community. Support has also poured in from all over the country. From London to Stoke, from Liverpool to Manchester, from Runcorn to Bradford, Oldham, Bury, Leeds Anwar Ditta and the Defence Committee have travelled to address meetings and conferences and gather support. And the results have been tremendous. The first stage of the campaign ended with a really successful demonstration in Roch-

dale on 1 March 1980 and the announcement that Anwar Ditta's appeal date was to be brought forward.

The growth of the campaign, its increasing support and effectiveness is the result of its simple anti-racist, anti-imperialist message. As an early leaflet of the campaign declared:

'Anwar Ditta's family is being destroyed by Britain's immigration controls... the Home Office has refused to admit Anwar's children because they are black.'

The Defence Committee identified the enemies of all the oppressed and appealed for support in the struggle against these enemies. As Anwar Ditta has repeatedly stated:

'The Labour and Tory party are the same, they are racist. They are doing this to me because I am black. They are breaking up black families. They treat black people worse than animals.'

In her speeches Anwar Ditta has made it clear that she speaks not only for herself, but for all black people oppressed by the British state and its lackeys. As the Defence Committee leaflet for the demonstration of 26 April put it:

'Anwar's case is not an isolated case of "injustice"... By demonstrating on April 26th, you will be supporting not only Anwar, but all those at present under attack from the racist immigration laws... victory for Anwar will be a blow struck against the immigration controls. It will be a victory for all black people against the racist, imperialist state.'

This message, this appeal to the oppressed, its



uncompromising anti-racist, anti-imperialist standpoint has been the condition for the support and successes of the campaign. Support has come, first and foremost from the organisations of the oppressed. The Asian Youth Movement Bradford, which initiated the Black Freedom March, the Asian Youth Movements in Leicester, Manchester and Dewsbury have all given wholehearted support to the campaign. Black Freedom March mobilising meetings in Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool also declared their support for the fight. The RCG has also given complete support to the campaign. Not only has it played a central role on the Defence Committee but has also mobilised support in Leeds, Blackburn, Sheffield, Liverpool and Manchester. Support has also been given from the North of England Irish Prisoners Committee (NEIPC), an organisation fighting on behalf of Irish freedom fighters in jail who are demanding POW status. The NEIPC recognises that Black and Irish people face a common enemy in the British imperialist state and indeed its platform includes the demand for an end to all immigration controls.

Anwar Ditta's case has also been raised in numerous trade union organisations - ASTMS branches in Leicester and Manchester, NUPE and TGWU branches, Liverpool, Rochdale and Runcorn & Widnes Trades Councils have declared their support as has the NEC of the CPSA. So too have student organisations in Manchester and Leeds.

The campaign so far has been a perfect example of how to wage a fight on cases such as Anwar Ditta's - make an alliance with the oppressed, appeal for support from the oppressed and those who are ready to stand with the oppressed against British imperialism. Of course, the campaign, precisely because it has chosen the path of anti-racism and anti-imperialism has met with opposition. Police attempts to intimidate it off the streets are dealt with in

GROWING SUPPORT FOR ANWAR DITTA

That Anwar Ditta's fight for her 3 children is winning more and more support was shown when over 600 people marched through Mossdale and Rusholme on 26 April. Supporting the demonstration were Friends of Nasira Begum, Rochdale Asian Women's Group, AYM Bradford, AYM Manchester, OWAAD, Women Against Imperialism, FRFI Scotland and Manchester, RCG Manchester and Leeds, Widnes and Runcorn Trades Council, Merseyside LP, SWP, IMG, RCT, CARF, CAIL and ANL.

another article on this page. In addition, opportunist elements on the Committee, from the ANL, SWP and CRE have unsuccessfully tried to disrupt its work. A most striking example being their opposition to an RCG proposal that the NEIPC be invited to speak at the demonstration of 1 March. Is this not a glaring example of opportunists seeking to hold back and prevent the unity of the oppressed. The NEIPC extends its support to Anwar Ditta's struggle, it recognises that struggle as part of the united fight of Irish and black people against imperialism. And opportunists vote against a proposal to have the NEIPC speak at an ADDC demonstration? The opportunists have also tried to use the campaign to lend false credibility to their own organisations. Having done virtually no work for the campaign, the ANL (which did not even have a banner on the 1 March demonstration) and the SWP (which had a contingent of around 15 people from a claimed Greater Manchester membership of hundreds, and which has not even paid its affiliation fee to the Defence Committee) demanded speaking rights for the demonstration of 26 April. Yet the very same ANL and SWP opposed the RCG having speaking rights on the 1 March demonstration for no better reason than the fact that the RCG is a 'political' (ie anti-imperialist) organisation. This despite the fact that of all organisations on the Defence Committee the RCG has put the most resources and effort into the campaign. Is this not sectarianism of the worst sort? Is this not an attempt of opportunists to jump on the bandwagon, to use the successes of the campaign in order to extend their own influence?

Despite these obstacles the fight will, if necessary, continue. The Appeal on 16 May is a vital day for Anwar and her family. Despite the overwhelming evidence on Anwar Ditta's side, there is no guarantee that she will win. The British state is guided neither by human consideration nor by concern for legal formalities. It has only one aim and that is to crush the resistance of the oppressed. If Anwar Ditta and her family lose the appeal, the fight will go on. As Anwar has declared:

'I will fight until I win for I have a right to my children. I will fight until the last breath of my body has gone.'

And the Defence Committee, whatever the obstacles, will continue and escalate the struggle.

**BRING ANWAR'S CHILDREN HOME!
SMASH ALL IMMIGRATION
CONTROLS!**

Eddie Abrahams

POLITICAL POLICE IN ROCHDALE

In the period leading up to the 26 April demonstration, the Anwar Ditta Defence Committee decided to hold a series of street meetings in the Asian districts of Rochdale, in order to build support for the campaign and demonstration. The first street meeting was held in King St South on 15 March, it proved to be very successful with many people coming out of their homes to listen to what Anwar and supporters of the defence campaign were saying. As we were about to move along the street to hold another meeting, the police arrived, a sergeant asked us if we were holding a demonstration, and made comments about blocking the footpath and causing an obstruction. We ignored his veiled threats, and moved along King Street to an open space where we proceeded to start another street meeting. Many Asian families stood in their doorways listening to what was being said, and people came and gathered round the speakers. This was too much for the police, two police cars arrived and parked in conspicuous positions, in an obvious attempt to intimidate the local Asian community from listening to the street meeting. A *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* supporter, who was in charge of the meeting was questioned by the police, and Anwar Ditta had her name, address and date of birth taken.

On Monday 24 March Anwar was paid a visit by two police officers. They specifically mentioned the street meeting, even feeling it necessary to remark that Anwar and Asian supporters of the defence campaign had spoken in Punjabi!

They said that people had been selling *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* which called for *Hands Off Ireland* and support for the prisoners in the H-Blocks. According to our two helpful police officers the mere mention of Ireland would only do harm to Anwar's campaign, and in their opinion Anwar should just concentrate on her own particular case. One of the police officers who just 'happened' to be Canadian then went on to explain that immigration laws weren't racist and just used against black people, but whites as well. Recounting his own problems with the immigration authorities as proof of this, conveniently forgetting the 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Act which specifically allowed for the entry of white

Commonwealth citizens whilst excluding blacks.

The cover of the British police being non-political has been blown, the police in Rochdale have exposed themselves for what they are, political agents of British imperialism. Whether it be the cosy advice of a fireside chat in Rochdale, or the drawn truncheon and riot shields in Southall and Bristol the role of the police is the same. It is to attempt to smash the organised fightback of black people against the racist British state, and to prevent the natural unity of all oppressed people fighting back against British Imperialism.

That's why the police are concerned about people selling *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* because *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* shows the connection and unity of the struggle against racism and the struggle against British imperialism in the North of Ireland. That's why the police visited Anwar, and that's why they specifically mentioned the slogans in support of the Republican movement, because, as the tremendous events of Bristol showed, the one thing British imperialism is terrified of, is if the black fightback against racism reaches the heights of the struggle of the nationalist working class in the North of Ireland.

The political role of the police is clear, it is to attempt to prevent that unity taking place by any means possible.

Bob Shepherd

FIGHTBACK

EARLINGTON FAMILY ON TRIAL FOR FIGHTING RACISM

Four out of five members of the Earlington family, accused of assault and obstruction after 20 police had invaded their home after a domestic argument in April 1979, were found guilty at their trial on 21/22 April this year. Guilty of what? Guilty of fighting racism – and doubly guilty for organising to fight it. Magistrate MacLean not only lined the family but ordered them to pay towards legal aid and costs. Why? Because they were backed by a defence committee. Even so, the trial was a partial victory. A charge of obstruction against Mr Earlington, and 2 charges of assault against Angela and Audrey were dropped due to lack of police evidence.

The trial took place at Highbury Corner Magistrates Court, whose name – for countless numbers of black people – stinks for its racism and injustice. The family were tried by Magistrate MacLean who seemed to be of the opinion that organising to fight racism and injustice was a far more serious 'crime' than assaulting the police. This comes as no surprise as each new challenge by black people to the whole racist system sounds the alarm for the British ruling class.

Show trial at Highbury Corner

The trial of the Earlington family was a show trial. Even as the trial opened, the police barrister and magistrate MacLean were rearranging the charges against members of the family. Even a year after the event, the police hadn't managed to get the charges straight! This initial confusion was later borne out by police witnesses. One police witness appeared although the charge of assault relating to him had been dropped. Another failed to appear at all although Angela was accused of assaulting him. Yet another, claiming to have arrested Audrey, had no record of it in his notebook. When pressed by the Earlington family barrister on this point, the policeman stated there was nothing unusual about it!

When one police witness admitted that about 20 police cars had been called on the scene, he refused to admit that this was in any way a heavy handed response by Hornsey Road police station!

Police called liars

The number and nature of the charges against Angela and Audrey was staggering. The Earlington family barrister pointed out that the

police were clearly lying. But Magistrate MacLean did not seem to find anything unusual about the fact that Angela, aged 14 at the time, was accused of biting one policeman, dragging another onto his knees and assaulting another. He didn't seem to find anything unusual about the fact that Audrey, approximately 5 foot tall, was accused of sitting on one policeman's shoulder, hitting another, and, in relation to a policeman weighing 17½ stone, ripping his shirt, breaking his pendant and scratching his neck. One police witness who described how he had stood and watched Mrs Earlington as she bit the 17½ stone policeman on his back, refused to admit that there had been anything unusual about his behaviour! Even the police doctor bore out the fact that Mrs Earlington had been injured by the police. He had diagnosed the injury to her thumb as a possible fracture and had advised her to visit hospital immediately. In contrast to this were the police injuries which were all of an extremely minor nature – including 3 bruises an eighth of an inch across!

Family fined for having defence committee

It came as no surprise to the Earlington family and the defence committee that magistrate MacLean returned a verdict of guilty against 4 out of 5 members of the family. For the three members of the family sentenced on that day, the fines were relatively low. MacLean saved his real fury for the fact that a defence committee had been formed:

'This case is fairly simple. It has been deliberately orchestrated by a small group of activists for their own purposes.'

This is the voice of the British ruling class. It is



Earlington Family Defence Committee demonstration 19 April 1980

Hornsey police are racist police!

This was the main shout that came from the loud and successful demonstration organised on 19 April by the Earlington Family Defence Committee to protest against the racist attack by 20 police on the Earlington family. The march was supported by Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! from London and Bristol, the Newham Defence Committee, Hammersmith NALGO and CRC, London RCG, Finsbury Park SWP and members of Socialist Challenge. Police presence on the march showed the hysteria with which the Hornsey Road police have responded to the challenge to its racist rule by the Earlington Family Defence Committee. A Chief Superintendent, Chief Inspector, 4 coaches of police and numerous special branch were present. The police guard was particularly heavy outside the police station in Hornsey Road where the march came to a halt for several minutes shouting 'Hornsey police OUT OUT OUT'.

The march ended with a rally outside the flats where the Earlingtons live. The FRFI speaker pointed out that black people were leading the struggle against the British imperialist state – Bristol had shown this clearly. An SWP speaker pledged unconditional support to the defence committee. A message of support from the Southall Youth Movement summed up the mood of the demonstration: Here to stay! Here to fight!

The Earlington Family Defence Committee is not intimidated by this attack. The fight against the racist police and courts will go on in the Holloway area. We ask everyone who supports that fight to send donations urgently to the Earlington Family Defence Fund c/o 49 Railton Road, London SE24 0LN.

End police attacks on all black people! Defend the Earlington family!

Olivia Adamson
Fight Racism representative on the defence committee.

NUJ SAYS THERE IS A WAR IN IRELAND

At its annual conference, held at Portrush in the Six Counties, the National Union of Journalists passed overwhelmingly a motion opposing censorship on Ireland and stating that there is a war in Ireland. This victory marks an important step forward in the British trade union movement.

The original motion, proposed to ADM by Magazine branch, read:

'This ADM demands an end to the continued operation of direct and indirect censorship of reporting of the war in Ireland and calls on the NEC to combat this censorship. In particular ADM calls upon the NEC to:

- Campaign for open access by journalists to prisoners 'on the blanket' in the H-Blocks, Long Kesh, so that NUJ members can report on conditions there. A report to be published in *The Journalist*.
- Publicise in *The Journalist*, and other media, all incidents of censorship in con-

nection with the war in Ireland.

- Oppose any moves to restrict access by journalists to representatives of the Provisional Sinn Féin, Provisional Irish Republican Army, Irish Republican Socialist Party, Irish National Liberation Army and any other organisation.'

The motion was drafted and proposed by Hands Off Ireland supporters. It was deliberately worded in a way which would not allow it to be ruled out of order.

Predictably at the Conference, the motion was watered down in certain respects – point i now calls for access to all prisoners including those on the blanket. Point iii now has no named organisations, instead it uses the expression 'any viewpoint'. Nonetheless, the motion is a great advance. The way is now open for NUJ members to fight British imperialism's clampdown on the news about Ireland and in particular about conditions in prisons. It will depend on the willingness of NUJ members to fight for the implementation of this policy.

JAMES MANGE MUST NOT HANG

On Thursday 15 November 1979 James Mange was sentenced to death in the racist apartheid 'court' at Pietermaritzburg. His appeal is due to be heard and the ANC(SA) is campaigning for his release.

Free all South African political prisoners
Victory to the ANC

Letter to Prime Minister Botha from Prisoners Action Committee of County Meath, Ireland

Prisoners Action Committee

Prime Minister	Gibbstown
Rep. of South Africa	Navan
Union Buildings	Co Meath
Pretoria	Ireland
South Africa	2 April 1980

Dear Sir,

We, members of the Prisoners Action Committee of County Meath Ireland, urge you to use your authority as Prime Minister of South Africa to commute the death sentence passed on James Mange in Pietermaritzburg, on 15 November 1979.

We urge you to direct your Minister of Justice to issue the necessary instructions to the Prison authorities to grant Political Status to all persons: male and female: all races: blacks, coloured and white, who have been imprisoned because of their opposition to Apartheid.

Finally, we urge you to end the Apartheid system as only this will avoid a major conflict in South Africa

HANDS OFF IRELAND

HARASSMENT

British imperialism is growing increasingly desperate in Ireland. It simply cannot defeat the IRA. It cannot break the struggle of the prisoners for POW status. Like a cornered rat, the British ruling class is fighting back with pure savagery. The attack on the women in Armagh jail is the latest example of this. Here even the rationing of sanitary towels is being used to try to break the women prisoners. Yet, as Jenny Marx wrote over 100 years ago,

'...all this spate of cruelty cannot break the iron spirit of the Irish'.

Inside and outside the prisons, the heroic struggle of the Irish people continues undaunted.

Throughout the world this 'spate of cruelty' is being exposed. But British imperialism has, in the past, had one major asset: the absence of a strong anti-imperialist movement inside Britain itself. Now, this too, is changing. For the most oppressed within Britain – the black workers – are also joining the struggle to destroy British imperialism and all its works.

The emerging black vanguard is increasingly identifying its own struggle with that of the Irish people. The Asian Youth Movement Bradford calls for victory to the IRA and regularly supports Sinn Féin demonstrations. The Anwar Ditta Defence Committee has won the support of the North of England Irish Prisoners Committee. And in St Pauls the black people instantly connected their rebellion with the Irish revolution – 'All the oppressed and suffering are IRA' as one youth put it. This growing unity of the oppressed strikes fear into the hearts of the corrupt and privileged elite who have, for so long, ridden on the backs of the oppressed.

The conditions are rapidly developing in which the revolutionary communist standpoint on Ireland can become a real force in the British working class. Hands Off Ireland, since its foundation, has given political and practical expression to that standpoint. Hands Off Ireland has stood out on three basic points: unconditional solidarity with the Republican movement, support for, and encouragement of, unity between all the oppressed; and unrelenting attack on the opportunists and fake socialists. It is this political standpoint which is now coming under increasing attack by the British police.

Since April last year there have been sixteen arrests of Hands Off Ireland supporters in London, Glasgow, Cardiff, Bristol and Luton. The spread of arrests, over twelve months and in five towns, makes it clear that the police are out to

cancel and cripple Hands Off Ireland's campaign.

Arrests

London April 79 Hands Off Ireland supporter arrested for heckling Prime-Minister-of-Torture James Callaghan during the general election.

Glasgow October 79 Robert Harvey arrested for behaviour liable to cause a breach of the peace – to wit wearing badges calling for an end to British torture, troops out now and smash H-Block.

Cardiff September 79 Two Hands Off Ireland supporters and one member of Sinn Féin arrested after police break up street meeting called to mark the third anniversary of the blanket struggle.

London December 79 Val Greene arrested under the PTA for giving 'food and shelter' to the relative of an Irish prisoner. Val Greene held for 4½ days and twice assaulted.

Bristol January 80 Hands Off Ireland supporters arrested for selling and charged with obstruction, making an illegal collection and theft.

Glasgow March 80 Hands Off Ireland seller attacked by loyalist and then arrested – for breach of the peace.

Luton April 80 Police assault picket on Luton police station and charge four Hands Off Ireland supporters with 'breach of the peace'.

Apart from the arrests, the police have also broken up Hands Off Ireland street meetings in London, Glasgow, Cardiff, Bristol, Leicester and Manchester. There can be no doubt at all that this is a police campaign to wear down Hands Off Ireland and censor our political campaign.



Democratic Rights Under Attack

The constant arrests, the charges and the court cases are imposing a growing burden on Hands Off Ireland. Not only is there the disruption caused by the arrests, and court cases which are dragging on for more than six months, there is the financial bleeding of the organisation. This is the method the police are using to attack Hands Off Ireland. They will not be allowed to succeed.

We cannot allow the police to decide who can hold street meetings, who can sell on the streets and what they can sell. This is an issue of concern to all who seek to defend democratic rights in Britain. The police are engaged in a political attack on Hands Off Ireland but are using methods which avoid being seen to engage in such an attack. If they were to raid our offices, for example, no one could fail to see what was happening. So they deploy tactics of constant low-level harassment instead. This police campaign must be stopped now before it reaches the stage of raids, frame-ups and jailings.

We are under attack because of our role in building an anti-imperialist movement. It is therefore the duty of all who claim to be part of the anti-racist anti-imperialist struggle to come to our defence. Hands Off Ireland is fighting this police censorship but **WE NEED YOUR HELP.**

There are eleven cases still running in London, Glasgow, Cardiff, Bristol and Luton. If we lose all, or any, of these cases the fines could run to thousands of pounds. We are asking you to help us – indeed to help yourself. If the police succeed against Hands Off Ireland then the whole working class will suffer. That is why we call on all socialists and democrats to support our campaign.

Hands Off Ireland needs money now!

Quite apart from the question of fines if any of our supporters are found guilty, the police harassment is already costing Hands Off Ireland a great deal of money. Money which is badly needed to finance Hands Off Ireland's campaigns. Simply producing leaflets, organising pickets and demonstrations, and organising legal defence is costing us hundreds and hundreds of pounds. In some cases Legal Aid has been refused.

If all the eleven comrades are found guilty, the fines and costs will run to thousands of pounds. Thousands of pounds which Hands Off Ireland cannot afford. If we have to pay these costs by ourselves the whole Hands Off Ireland campaign will be crippled. Some of our comrades could end up in prison for non-payment of fines. In effect, the police will have won.

We desperately need **YOUR SUPPORT.** Please send us as much as you can afford as soon as possible. Raise money for us. Petitions and collecting sheets are available from the address below. We need every penny we can get.

Donations, messages of support and requests for information and/or collecting sheets to:

HOI Defence Campaign (FR)
49 Raiton Road
London SE24 0LN.

Postal orders and cheques should be made out to HOI Defence Campaign.



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PICKET

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When Robert Harvey goes to court.

The Saga of Rats: Rats retire from the British Army after long service in the North of Ireland....



HANDS OFF IRELAND No 10

This issue contains a major interview with Sean Mac Stiofain – former Chief of Staff of the Provisional IRA. In outlining the revolutionary character of the Republican struggle he shows the essential connection between the struggle for national liberation in Ireland, the worldwide movement against imperialism, and the struggle against racism in Britain.

Other articles include: British Terror inside and outside H-Block, in the words of the people themselves; reports on the campaign in Britain; and The Easter Rising – first in a series of articles on the history of the Irish people's struggle.

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HANDS OFF IRELAND!

ROYAL VICTORIA STRIKE DEFEATED

The strike in April by NUPE workers at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast once again starkly exposed the role of trade union leaders in helping to sustain the British occupation of the North of Ireland. The strike was sparked off when a British soldier accidentally dropped his machine gun in a corridor of the hospital, firing a shot into the wall. For the 1300 NUPE workers at the hospital this incident was the last straw, coming as it did on top of the ever-increasing militarisation of the hospital and the continuous harassment of hospital workers by the British Army.

The Royal Victoria Hospital, situated on the Falls Road, has long been used by the British Army as a base for the surveillance and patrolling of neighbouring republican areas. In the last few years this occupation of the hospital by the British Army has become more and more blatant and extensive. In the words of one of the strike leaders, the hospital has been turned into a 'mini-fortress' by the Army. In 1977, for example, in order to consolidate and strengthen its presence in the hospital, the Army built a ten-foot high wall, together with a rocket-proof protective screen, around the entire hospital. Last November, ignoring protests by nurses, doctors and hospital workers, the Army established a post on top of a block of nurses' flats at the hospital in order to spy on the surrounding republican areas. In the same arrogant way British soldiers within the hospital continually harass hospital workers by stopping and questioning them, and the Army is even about to introduce closed-circuit TV cameras to continuously monitor the entrances and corridors of the hospital.

In response to this increasing militarisation of the hospital and the harassment of their members the trade union leadership has offered only token resistance and often not even that. Indeed, John Coulthard, regional organiser of NUPE, who is one of the two NUPE full-time officials responsible for negotiating on 'security' at the RVH, recently boasted that he had always enjoyed good relations with the Army. It is not surprising that the NUPE workers at the hospital some time ago passed a vote of no confidence in Mr Coulthard and more recently indicated that Mrs Inez McCormack, the other full-time NUPE official

responsible for negotiations on 'security' was equally unacceptable to them. The main aim of the strike – apart from protesting at the presence of the British Army in the hospital – was to secure for the workers the right to negotiate for themselves, through their local branch sub-committee, on questions of 'security' and the presence of the British troops in the hospital. As one of the strike leaders put it, 'The members' faith is in those they elected and not in any paid official. They made it clear in a massive vote that the only negotiators they want are their own sub-committee.'

The striking NUPE workers found themselves opposed not only by the British Army and by loyalist politicians such as Ian Paisley and Robert Bradford but also by their own union leaders. The latter clearly felt their own positions as professional union bureaucrats threatened by the strike and recoiled in horror from the spectacle of workers challenging military repression and harassment. When the strike started John Coulthard condemned it, saying, 'Our Executive Council cannot authorise the industrial action currently being taken by the local branch. The whole subject is politically explosive and extremely sensitive.' He later attacked the strikers for, in his words, attempting to make the hospital a 'no-go area'. The national Executive Council of NUPE in London sided with Coulthard against the workers in condemning the strike and insisted that negotiations on 'security' were the concern solely of the full-time officials. At the same time Terry Carlin, Northern Ireland Officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, stepped in and viciously attacked the strikers for 'seeking to put patients' lives in danger' (in fact the workers

had offered to provide emergency cover but had been refused by the hospital authorities). To bring additional pressure to bear on the strikers Carlin rapidly convened a meeting of the leaders of other unions at the hospital who then also condemned the strike.

In the face of such combined opposition the workers soon felt that they had little option but to return to work. Having helped to sabotage the strike the union leaders then gloated over their success. John Coulthard said:

'Our members go back in the full knowledge that the Army and cameras are there and that nothing has been gained in terms of an investigation into the troops' behaviour and that Mrs Inez McCormack and I are the full-time negotiators for NUPE on security matters.'

Terry Carlin for his part commented smugly:

'I am very pleased the workers have heeded the considered advice of their unions to call off this unofficial dispute.'

By coincidence the annual conference of the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU opened in Belfast on the day after the strike at the RVH ended and as if to underline the treacherous role which it had played the ICTU leadership paraded its reactionary views once more at the conference. In opening the conference the loyalist Lord Mayor of Belfast, William Bell, said that he

'would like to publicly thank Mr Terry Carlin, the Northern Ireland Officer of the ICTU, and the national executive of NUPE for the very responsible way in which they acted during the recent unofficial strike at the RVH'. '...our country has never stood in greater need of wise leadership and co-operation from the members of trade unions.'

The ICTU leadership was quick to show its 'co-operative' attitude on the opening day of the conference when four trade unionists were forcibly evicted from the conference for distributing leaflets to delegates calling for trade union action to alleviate the plight of the prisoners in the H-Blocks.

Later the ICTU leadership also refused to allow an emergency resolution calling for the withdrawal of the trade union representatives from the Northern Ireland Police Authority to be put to the conference. The resolution was proposed by Jack Hassard who resigned as trade union representative from the Police

Authority last year in protest at RUC brutality and the refusal of the Police Authority to do anything about it, despite the clear evidence of police torture and the total lack of credibility of the Police Authority.

The proceedings at this conference, like the strike at the Royal Victoria Hospital immediately before it, not only demonstrated once again the role of the trade union leadership in covering up for, and collaborating with the British state in its attacks on the Irish working class. They also showed that increasing numbers of rank-and-file trade unionists in the North of Ireland are prepared to act in defiance of their leaders in seeking to resist the torture, repression and harassment of workers which is inseparable from British rule in Ireland – whether it be on the streets or in the workplace, in the interrogation cells of Castlereagh or the H-Blocks of Long Kesh.

Robert Blake.

Belfast Central Relatives Action Committee

Dear Friend,

I am writing on behalf of the Belfast Central Relatives Action Committee to show our support for the work done by Hands Off Ireland, when they picketed Luton Police Station in support of Jim Reilly and his comrades. This case is an example of the way the PTA is used to harass activists.

The brutal manner in which the police attacked the picket surely shows that they will go to any lengths to suppress any protests, which expose the draconian PTA laws. Best wishes for all future work done in support of the Political Status struggle.

Yours in friendship

Lily Fitzsimons

It has come to our attention that Issue 23 of **Rebel**, an Irish radical newspaper, contained a reprint of the **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** interview with Comrade Mugabe, first published in **FRFI** No2. We wish to make it clear that this reprint was done without our permission, and had **Rebel** asked us we would not have granted permission given **Rebel's** attacks on the Republican movement.

PTA ARRESTS

continued from page 12

Held in punishment block

The conditions under which Jim and Gerry are being held also violate their rights as remand prisoners. Both men are forced to wear prison uniform and are being held on 23 hour lock-up in solitary confinement and denied association or recreation. Since being moved to Leicester prison, they have been held in the punishment block. They have been denied copies of **Hands Off Ireland!** which have been sent in to them. All this treatment is meted out despite the fact that even the police conspiracy against them has not yet resulted in conviction! Irish prisoners are, in fact, treated as 'guilty until proven innocent' in this imperialist 'democracy of ours'.

Petit Bourgeois left betray Republican movement

The arrest and treatment of Jim Reilly and Gerry MacLochlainn makes it clear enough what is at stake: either the rights of the oppressed are defended in the face of attack or they're not. Those who defend those rights are siding with the oppressed against imperialism. Those who do not defend those rights are siding with imperialism against the oppressed. We have repeatedly condemned the petit bourgeois left as anti-Republican and pro-imperialist – the experience of Jim and Gerry's case confirms, once again, the justice and necessity

of our condemnation of the fake socialists in the petit bourgeois left.

Let us look at the record. The IMG national leadership were kept fully informed of all developments and the time and place of all the pickets on police stations. They did not lift a finger to defend Jim and Gerry. They were nowhere to be seen.

The SWP has recently formed an End the PTA Campaign. This so-called campaign was also nowhere to be seen. Like the IMG, the SWP national leadership did nothing at all to defend Jim and Gerry whilst they were being held in Luton.

Local members of the SWP did give valuable and consistent support which we welcome. But the newspaper of their organisation – **Socialist Worker** – has yet to print a word about the arrests.

The RCT too has its very own PTA campaign – the Smash the PTA Campaign. The contribution of this 'mighty' campaign amounted to next to nothing. Three nights running the RCT stalwarts went home at 8.50pm long before the end of the pickets. On Easter Sunday, in common with the rest of the petit bourgeois left, they refused to support the mass picket called by Provisional Sinn Féin. So much for the RCT who are currently campaigning under the incomprehensible slogan 'Bring the Irish War to Britain'. They could have made a start by bringing themselves to Luton.

And what of the Troops Out Movement? They appeared on just one of the six pickets. Apart from that, nothing has been heard of them, nothing seen of them.

Free Gerry MacLochlainn! Free Jim Reilly!

Jim Reilly and Gerry MacLochlainn are still in the hands of the British state. Both are well-known for their uncompromising commitment to the struggle against British imperialism. They deserve our complete and unconditional support. If they are found guilty they face long prison sentences. Gerry MacLochlainn can, in any case be deported – he torn from the life he has built in South Wales and simply kicked out of the country.

Hands Off Ireland has already made clear its complete commitment to the campaign to free Jim and Gerry. The petit bourgeois left has made clear its treacherous abandonment of these two comrades. If Jim and Gerry – both dedicated fighters for the working class – are incarcerated it is a defeat for us all. The defence of Jim Reilly and Gerry MacLochlainn against imperialism and all its allies must start now and continue until both men are free to once again take up the fight to drive British imperialism out of Ireland.

STOP PRESS BAIL REFUSED

On Friday 25 April, the Luton magistrates refused bail to Jim Reilly and Gerry MacLochlainn. In opposing bail the prosecution concocted a network of lies and cynical supposition to show that the two could not be trusted to keep to their bail conditions. Lie 1: that Gerry was trying to sell his Welsh home and return to

Ireland. Gerry bought the house only eighteen months ago and has just been offered promotion in his job. Hardly indications for selling up! Gerry denied this tale in court. Lie 2: that Jim Reilly is divorced with no family ties in Luton. Furthermore, knowing full well that Jim Reilly has been suspended without pay from work and that he will lose his job if he is detained on remand for much longer, the counsel argued that because Jim Reilly is 'likely to lose his job' and being 'divorced', there are 'no community ties' that would ensure that Jim stayed in Luton if freed on bail. No 'community ties'? Jim has lived and worked in Luton for 34½ years and has close family ties in the area.

The final trick was to claim that further questions had to be made of a person whose name the police inspector refused to divulge, and whose whereabouts were unknown!

The whole charade has a clear purpose. The police will oppose bail until Jim and Gerry have lost their jobs. If the police need to play hide and seek with persons unknown they will do so. If they need to lie they will. Gerry and Jim, who is in ill health with only a quarter of normal lung function left, continue to be held in Leicester prison.

HANDS OFF IRELAND!
BRISTOL PUBLIC MEETING
SMASH POLICE CENSORSHIP
ON IRELAND!
7.30pm 23 May
Baptist Mill Community Centre
Horley Road, St Werburgh's
Bristol

HANDS OFF IRELAND

ARMAGH BARBARIC ATTACK ON WOMEN PRISONERS

Republican women in Armagh jail have, from the start, played a full part in the struggle for POW status. The recent escalation of brutality in Armagh is British imperialism's recognition of this fact.

On 7 February this year the women were violently assaulted by a gang of riot-clad male warders. They were repeatedly kicked and punched. Several were carried spread-eagled before the governor. Since that brutal assault the women — who are allowed to wear their own clothes as all women prisoners in the Six Counties are — have been refused any change of clothes, subjected to 23 hour lock up and treated to every brutality which the limitless sadism of British imperialism can devise. Even the denial of sanitary towels is being used as a weapon to break the resistance of the women!

However, the women, like their comrades in H-Block, are not breaking under this attack. The men in H-Block are defying the most barbaric prison conditions in Europe. They are refusing to submit. It may be that British imperialism believed that an attack on the women could break the united resistance to criminalisation. If so the courageous determination of the women in Armagh jail is proving them wrong.

We reprint below a report on conditions in Armagh which is reprinted from *An Phoblacht/Republican News* (29/3/80). The report shows clearly how the struggle for POW status is reaching a climax. It is now more urgent than ever that the movement in Britain takes up the cause of the Irish prisoners of war in order to bring to an end imperialist barbarity in the prisons.

CONDITIONS in Armagh jail continue to deteriorate for the thirty-two Republican women prisoners, who since early February have been denied washing and toilet facilities by a prison regime desperate to break their protest for political status. In a smuggled note the prisoners state: "The conditions which we are being subjected to are an outrage against human dignity."

On Wednesday 26 March four women prisoners were attacked by warders in the prison yard and suffered bruises and cuts.

On Saturday 29 March a prisoner had her only shirt stolen by male warders. Anne-Marie Quinn (Ballymurphy) had hung her shirt out of the cell window to air, but it was taken by the warders. Despite complaints being made to the governor, several days later the shirt had still not been returned.

On Sunday 30 March while the women were at mass prison warders entered their cells and in an act of blatant harassment emptied chamber pots over the beds.

Serious

Regular acts of petty harassment by the warders include switching on and off their cell lights, banging on their cell doors and rattling their door-shutters back and forward. The governor, Scott, has also been preventing two women, Dolores O'Neill and Anne Bateson (both South Derry) from getting the regular extra visits which they are entitled to because they are on appeal.

But perhaps the most serious development has occurred with one of the women, Patricia Craig (Downpatrick), contracting a rash called 'impetigo'. The rash which has started on the side of her face, is spreading rapidly and is highly infectious. Because of her refusal to be 'criminalised' Patricia Craig has been denied medical treatment by the prison regime and the prison doctor, Dr Cole.

Smuggled

In a smuggled note dated last Tuesday, 8 April the prisoners state:

"We have been over here, in 'A' wing six weeks now, since being moved from 'B' wing and conditions are extremely bad. Our cells are completely covered in excreta and urine. The dust and dirt are building up to a marked degree. When one walks across the cell floor the dust rises up, catching at our chests and throats."

"We used to have a table, chair and locker in our cells, but the screws removed those and we

are now left with just our beds. We have no sheets and no pillow cases — just old dirty grey blankets which are now completely filthy.

"We ourselves are completely filthy. We have not washed nor have we had any change of clothes since February 7th, so we are in a filthy state.

"Many girls already have infections which through time will only get worse. Since it is six weeks since we were denied toilet and washing facilities all of us have now gone through our menstrual cycle in these filthy conditions. It is a dangerous time, the risk of infection being very high. Sanitary towels are just thrown into us without wrappings. We have nowhere to dispose of them when used, so they lie amongst the dirt and dust. The medical staff refuse to enter our cells, because of the stench.

"Although we have combs it is pointless trying to use them because our hair is that thick with dust and dirt, it is impossible to get a comb through it.

"Our skin has turned a dusty grey, not only because of the dirt but because we are locked in our cells twenty-three hours per day. The windows of our cells are boarded up with large pieces of wood thus allowing little air or daylight through. The lights need to be kept constantly on to enable us to see properly and because of this many girls are complaining of headaches. The spy-holes in our cell doors are also blocked off.

"As regards the food situation it is a major problem. Breakfast consists of porridge which is so thick and lumpy it is inedible. Bread is rarely seen and if by any chance we do get some, it is stale. Supper consists of one pancake or one sandwich.

"The quantity and quality of the food is totally inadequate. Many girls have lost weight — weight which they can ill-afford to lose. We are unlocked one at a time to collect our meals and because of this time consuming method, the majority of the girls' meals are, by the time they receive them freezing. We have complained on numerous occasions about the food but to no avail. If this situation continues there can only be serious weight losses amongst the girls.

"The attitude of the screws is extremely hostile; they are clad in protective clothing, including masks. Quite frequently when a girl is out to collect her meal and the screws think she is talking too long, they drag her back to her cell making sure that they get a good few punches and kicks at her. We are constantly subjected to physical and verbal abuse from the screws."

BRITAIN PTA ARRESTS

On Sunday and Monday 30 and 31 March two leading members of Provisional Sinn Féin (Britain) — Gerry MacLochlainn South Wales Organiser and Jim Reilly Home Counties Organiser — were arrested under the racist anti-Irish Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Both comrades have been subjected to the illegal and discriminatory treatment which all Irish people who fall into the hands of the British state suffer. Denial of access to solicitor and friends, systematic police lies to supporters making enquiries, constant transfer from one station to another and, in this case, actually disappearing for three days. Their case is typical of British harassment of Irish people and exposes the reality of British 'democracy' and 'justice'.

Gerry MacLochlainn was denied all access to friends and solicitor for the 7½ days he was held prior to being charged. He was held in four different stations — Abergavenny, Cwmbran, Pontypool and Luton. All enquiries met with either blank refusals to give information or lies. Jim Reilly was allowed one visit from his solicitor on the second day and then he too was held incommunicado for the remainder of his 6½ day detention.

and kicked and punched the demonstrators back from the entrance. This was followed by the arrest of five Hands Off Ireland supporters — four of whom were subsequently charged with 'breach of the peace'.

The attack on the picket was designed to stamp out the defence campaign building up for Jim and Gerry — to allow the police to pursue their harassment undisturbed. In this it completely failed. We were back the next morning to



This treatment is standard for people held under the notorious PTA. It is part of the overall attack on Irish people carried out by British imperialism. It also established dangerous precedents for police power — precedents which are a necessary part of the ruling class's armoury to deal with the struggles of the oppressed against imperialism.

Hands Off Ireland threw itself into the campaign to defend Jim and Gerry. Nightly pickets were placed on the stations where they were held. In South Wales they were organised by Hands Off Ireland. In Luton they were organised by Provisional Sinn Féin and Hands Off Ireland. The purpose of the pickets was two-fold — one to let Jim and Gerry know that they had support, two to draw attention to the police activities and break the silence surrounding the arrests. In this respect the pickets were highly successful attracting support from local people and feeding information to the local press so that the arrests were publicised.

Police assault picket

A vital part of police arrests under the PTA is the silence that ordinarily surrounds those arrests. Comrades are picked up, held for eight days completely cut off from friends and support. This allows the police to do whatever they want in that period in an effort to extract information or 'confessions'. Therefore the last thing they want is publicity and demonstrations. The picketting and protest is, in fact, a real threat to the PTA. This is why, on Easter Sunday night, the Luton police launched a violent assault on the picket.

That night's picket was the largest of all, supported by Provisional Sinn Féin and Hands Off Ireland contingents from London, Manchester and Scotland. At 8.20pm the police attacked. 10-15 police rushed from the station

picket the court where Jim and Gerry appeared on Easter Monday.

Court picketted

That morning Jim and Gerry appeared in court and were charged with conspiracy to cause explosions. The public gallery was filled with supporters — from Provisional Sinn Féin, Hands Off Ireland, Luton SWP and individuals. Outside Hands Off Ireland maintained a picket throughout the proceedings. Jim and Gerry were remanded in custody — as is common practice for Irish people in the hands of the British police and their courts. They were whisked off to prison without even being allowed to see their solicitor after the hearing. Finding out which prison they were taken to was the next problem, for Jim and Gerry disappeared for three days!

Britain's disappeared persons

At first it was said that they had gone to Bedford. Then it was said that they had been moved to Leicester. Then both prisons denied holding them. Their solicitor — Alistair Logan — could not find out where they were. Their friends and supporters could not find out. So right here, in 'democratic' Britain in the midst of an outcry about 'human rights' in Afghanistan, remand prisoners simply disappear. So much for British 'democracy' and 'justice'. So much for the rights of remand prisoners — 'innocent until proven guilty'. British imperialism tramples on any and every right in pursuit of its war against the oppressed.

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